

Campaign Notes

Plea for Help

Goal: Obtaining proper medical treatment and political asylum for Demba Diop.

Outline: Demba is an expatriate of Mauritania, North Africa, confined to Rheinbach Prison in Germany on fabricated charges. Demba is the only Black prisoner of the 500 prisoners at Rheinbach. Demba has been an active participant of the FLMA (Forces de Liberation Africaine de Mauritanie) since the early 1970s and is identified as an active participant as such by the Mauritanian Government, who rule under Islamic Law.

Amnesty International has documented thousands of incidents of political imprisonment, torture, murders and unfair trials of FLMA members by the Mauritania Government. (See *Mauritania 1986-1989: Background to a Crisis: Three Years of Political Imprisonment, Torture and Unfair Trial: Amnesty International* — Embargoed for Nov/30/89.) Regardless of Amnesty International's appeal to the Mauritania Government for compliance with basic human rights, these practices continue.

Prison officials in Germany have injected the AIDS virus in Demba after treatment for a thrombosis of his leg. He is now testing HIV+ and they refuse to issue him any medication to bring the disease into remission. They are also attempting to deport Demba back to Mauritania — where he will face execution by the government there.

Demba does have two court-appointed attorneys, who are listed below. We are asking you to actively seek political asylum for Demba with France or the Ivory Coast. Demba is due for release in April 1992. Time is running out — if political asylum is not obtained by then, he will be deported to Mauritania and executed. Demba has fought for the abolition of slavery and oppression and needs our support and assistance. We urge you to call or write Demba's attorneys and offer assistance. Any of you with contacts overseas please utilize them to obtain political asylum for Demba. We also ask that he receive medication to treat his condition.

Letters of concern should also be sent to Demba along with letters asking Amnesty International to intervene.

Demba has put his life on the line for the people — he needs our help — don't let him be executed.

Yours in Solidarity

John Perotti

Addresses:

Demba Diop, Aachenerstr 47, 5308 Rheinbach, Germany

Amnesty International:

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1 Eastern St., London WC1X 8DJ,
United Kingdom

Outside Contact:

Ms. Gabi Hirnuler, Buchfernleihe, Fur Ge Fangene
4600 Dortmund 41, Germany

Outside Attorney:

Mr. Geert Oeken, Hohenzeller W611, 5000
Köln 7 Germany, Phone: 0227/287 737 432 ∞

Geronimo ji Jaga denied parole

The California parole board once again refused to release Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), a former leader of the Black Panther Party. Supporters did claim a small victory since the board order Pratt moved to the prison medical center in Vacaville for evaluation of post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from his service in Vietnam. Pratt's lawyers presented the board petitions signed by over 10,000 people urging his release.

"We showed the truth" said Muhjah Shakir, a leader of the committee set up to win Pratt's freedom. "When they claimed he was a discipline problem, we showed how he had worked for years educating gang bangers, doing literacy classes and teaching Black History classes. But it was clear that their vendetta continues."

Convicted of murder in 1973, ji Jaga was recently denied a new trial, although the main witness against him was a paid FBI informant, and new evidence showed that he was 400 miles away from the scene of the crime at the time of the killing.

The board will reconsider ji Jaga's parole in one year. It said that he must avoid

disciplinary charges and upgrade his job skills. All major disciplinary charges against him to date have been trumped up by prison authorities; he went into the hearing with five job offers. Write to:

Campaign to free Geronimo ji Jaga

P.O. Box 3585

Oakland, CA 94609

information taken from the New York Guardian

Sick and tired of Texas

Nathaniel McCrumb Lamass Shabazz, a 42-year old Afro-American in the Eastham Unit of the Texas Gulag system has been living on the edge of his life for a long time. Nathaniel is a diabetic and recently his condition has dramatically worsened. He's been denied the proper diet for a diabetic. The warden at Eastham has him socked away in Administrative Segregation because he can't work, yet he is unable to work because he has a broken bone in his foot and there's no medical care in sight. Denied two important visits to the infirmary in December by administrative goons, Nathaniel lives in fear that his blood sugar level will fall below 40. When it does he begins to shake, has headaches and feels exhausted. His condition also affects his mental functioning. It can lead to seizure and maybe death. Nathaniel needs letters of support and letters to the warden (who is black himself).

Write to:

Nathaniel Lamass Shabazz (aka Nathaniel McCrumb) #402618-A,
P.O. Box 16, Eastham Unit
Lovelady, TX 75851

Warden C.R. Martin
P.O. Box 16, Eastham Unit
Lovelady, TX 75851

Political Poet?

Cockroach Publications is doing a monthly paper of anti-authoritarian poetry and needs submissions. They are especially looking for works by political prisoners and those who are aligned with them. Anti-authoritarian will not be defined rigidly. Write to:

Cockroach Publications
c/o Patrick
113 Elmwood Rd.
Oakville, Ont L6K 2A6

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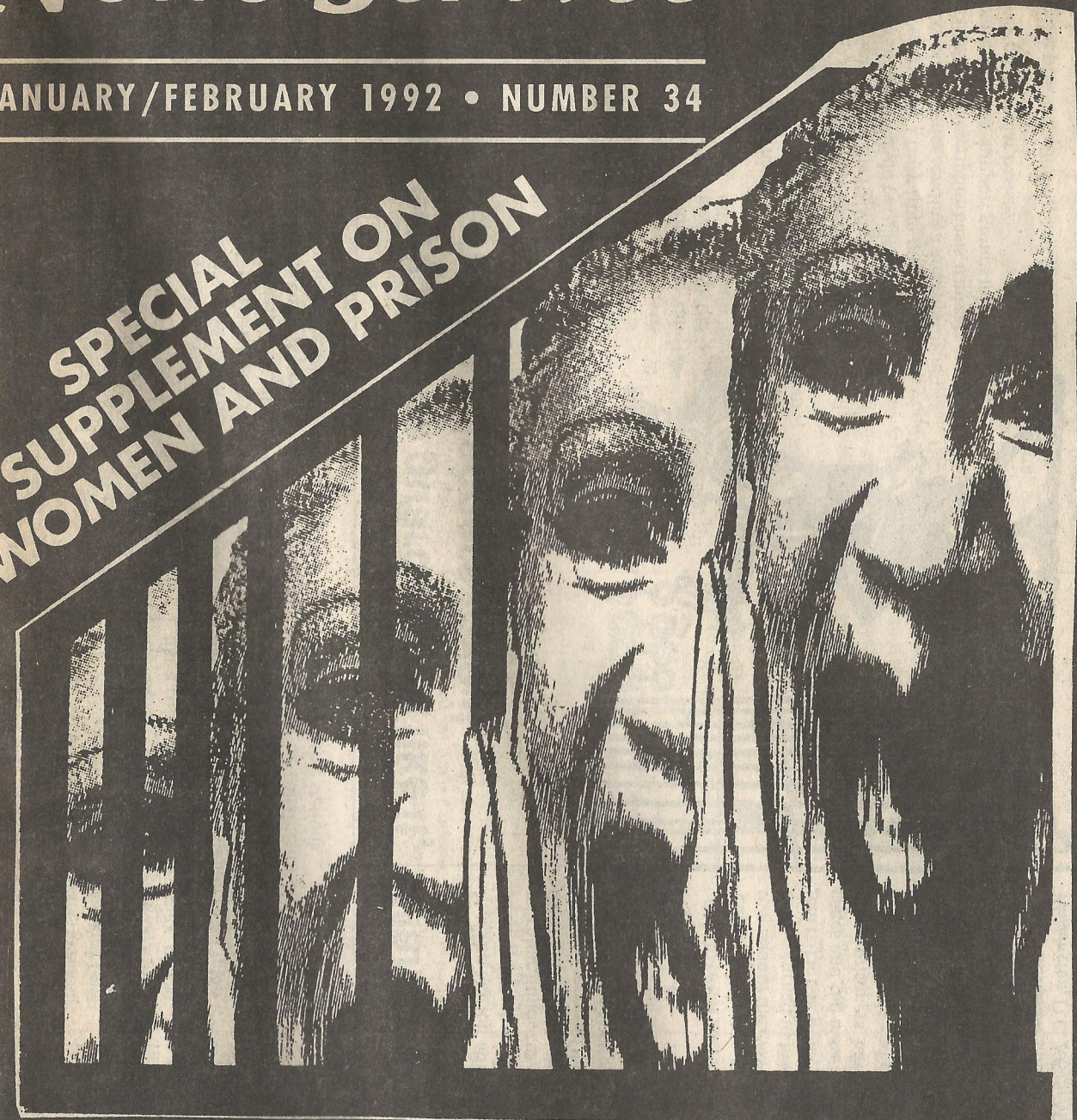
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SPECIAL
SUPPLEMENT ON
WOMEN AND PRISON



AIDS EDUCATION MATERIALcentrepread
UPDATE ON DHORUBA BIN-WAHAD12
TRIALS • ATTICA, MOHAWK WARRIORS,
RICHARD WILLIAMS15

Peer advocacy – women, prison, and AIDS

SUSAN ROSENBERG

Women in this society are forgotten, and invisible.

Women in prison are feared and stigmatized, left to live with all the oppression that women in exploitative society face.

Women in prison with AIDS are feared, invisible, and left to die early and painful deaths.

Women in prison with AIDS are dying every day.

Women in prison with AIDS are denied the right to fight to survive in order to live as long as possible. Prisoners are denied decent and adequate care and denied the most elemental of needs — human dignity.

A woman with full blown AIDS who is dying in a segregated facility in one of the seventeen states that mandatorily segregates all HIV+ prisoners has no human rights and is losing what little constitutional protections exist.

Women in prison whose children, husbands, lovers, and friends have AIDS are denied their very mother-

hood by the imposition of restrictions that deny contact with the community.

This is a crisis. It is a medical, economic, political and social crisis. It is a massive societal freak out. A public policy nightmare, where human suffering is at a premium. While the following facts are known, they bear repeating. The overwhelming number of women in prison with AIDS are Black and Puerto Rican women. The leading cause of death for Black women between the ages of 20 and 45 in all major urban centres is now AIDS. In San Juan, Puerto Rico the rate of HIV positivity is the highest in the United States. While behavior, not race, class or gender, determines who gets the virus, the statistics on AIDS — who gets it and why — cannot be analyzed outside of the system of white supremacy and racism that governs much of this society. The AIDS epidemic expands the experience of genocide that the African-American community faces, and that the colonization of Puerto Rico has created.

Women in prison who are HIV+ or with full blown AIDS are in the front line of this crisis.

We live in an isolated, enclosed and very particular form of hell.

I have been in prison almost seven years. In that time the AIDS virus was identified and named, before that it was simply a disease that afflicted gay men and not of particular concern to the government, public health officials, or the prison system.

I have seen AIDS as it has travelled through various jails and prisons. I have witnessed seropositivity become opportunistic infections, and inexplicable gynecological ailments transform into full blown AIDS through Theresa and Joey, Janet and Kay, Cecilia and Lisa. I have carried women from their cells on stretchers to jail infirmaries knowing they will not return. I have called families from collect pay phones with news of illness and then death. I have written messages for funerals and raised money for flowers. Sentence reduction motions and early medical release papers have been written, and letters to outside community organizations calling for solidarity have fallen on deafening silence.

Peer Advocacy in DC Jail

After spending a year in the DC Jail and witnessing the treatment and conditions that women with HIV and AIDS lived within, I became an AIDS prisoner peer advocate. I and my other women co-defendants (all of us political prisoners), because of our educational background and our access to resources on the outside, began doing legal and medical advocacy for the women we were incarcerated with. The work involved writing legal papers about sentencing reductions, letters to the D.C. Parole Commission, taking depositions for legal action against the jail and its lack of medical treatment and discriminatory policies. When we first arrived in DC Jail in 1988 anyone who was known to be positive was redflagged by the medical department. They were sometimes segregated, fed from special diet trays served by other prisoners who were told to wear gloves while feeding them. As a result of this complete violation of confidentiality they were

brutally stigmatized and bitterly harassed. There was no counselling or organized psychological treatment, and mood depressants or elevators were dispensed without any medical analysis of their effects on the virus or the persons' state of health.

Out of a population of 500 women, 98% of whom are Black, 40% are HIV+. This figure is from a blind study conducted by the DC Department of Corrections (DC DOC). This study was never released. In 1990, from September through December, eight prisoners died while in custody, all from AIDS-related infections. The increase is staggering.

The death of one woman prisoner in the D.C. Jail, due to complete lack of medical care and counselling, and

CONT'D. NEXT PAGE



WOMEN'S SUPPLEMENT



The Hanging Sheet

The Hanging Sheet is the name of a play produced by the Drama Department at Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., from Nov. 21-23/91. The following is an interview with the playwright, Theresa Ann Glaremin, a former prisoner at the Prison for Women (P4W) in Kingston, Ont.

Q. What made you start writing?

I wrote a play about how I was feeling emotionally as a female imprisoned. I needed to give voice to what was happening around me, and therefore I wrote the play as part of a theatre course (part of the Queen's University Correctional Project). I struggled with writing the piece — it was difficult because women were dying. I was close to the women, and I didn't know how to project all the emotions of my humanness onto the page. Therefore it became a task, but one I could relate with. I wanted to bring out all that humanness and not be penalized for it, not make anyone around me feel bad, not blaming anyone, but try to make it better, to correct it, that's what I was doing in a Correctional Services penitentiary.

I wanted to raise the consciousness of the audience enough to make them feel their humanness. No one wants to go and watch something really depressing or to hear the horror

stories about torture inside penitentiaries, so I wrote the piece with each character being a woman who died. I wrote about the last mental image I had of their physical beings, the last time I saw each of them, and brought forth all of the humanness and emotion I could bear witness to in my struggle against oppression. As a female I wanted to have a voice that speaks for women. I endeavored to have the voices of the women who hung themselves heard through my voice, in my story.

Q - What effect does it have, that most of the women who hung themselves were native women?

I found that these women had a vital part of them stripped away. The pain and helplessness tormented their equanimity from them. If you have a closeness to something and you feel it being stripped away from you, you feel trapped, you feel helpless, you feel pain. It's bad from a female perspective, but it's also bad from the per-

spective of a culture that is being stripped away, that is fighting genocide. There is a closeness with the Mother Earth, there is a closeness with Grandfather Creator, there is a closeness with Grandmother Moon, the Wind, the Earth. The connection is broken behind the steel and keys and chains and bars. There is no room for balance. There is no room to practise our spirituality.

We cannot walk in harmony with people that torment us constantly. For native women the balance is interrupted on both the spiritual level and the human level. When I put the sheet around my neck and stood on my bed and then jumped off that cold

February in 1990, I didn't want to die. I did it because the pain was so great. There was mistreatment from certain correctional staff and ignorance and misuse of power from the parole board. I just could not go on.

I missed being a mother. I missed being close to the earth. For the first two years I wanted to go outside so badly just so I could play in the dirt. I wanted to build a fire outside and dance through it. I couldn't harvest, I couldn't gather. I couldn't bring forth life on any level. I felt absolutely trapped, confined.



The pain that drove me was there because I was a human being, a female human being. My emotions of caring and love and protection were so deep in me and when they tried to strip away my motherhood, my sisterhood, it was too much to bear.

I paid a price for being a battered woman, an abused woman. I cried out for help many times but there were no social programs in place for women that were being battered by their spouses in the late '60s and '70s. I made a decision to leave a battering situation. I left; he came looking for me. He was on alcohol very badly. I ended up in prison to protect my boy. I thought he was going to kill my boy because he told me that if I said anything he'd hurt my boy. I felt: it's true. I know he's going to do it, because I remember all the things he did to me. I remember because that's why I left. I remembered I didn't want to die. I remembered I wasn't going to be beaten to death. I remembered that I had a right to live and I made the decision after ten years to leave and I ended up in prison. I was there for about six-and-a-half years.

Most of the women who hung and slashed were survivors of abuse in a male dominated society that had chosen to cast a blind eye. I don't believe that there is a difference between men and women. Who I am teaches me to embrace both genders and sexes in all creatures and all living things.

Why is it in this society that when you make a mistake you're never forgiven. You can never be forgiven. And it doesn't matter what you say or do, because they're going to blame you anyway. You hear all this talk

about being Christian. I'm so sick of hearing about Christians because a lot of these Christians don't know anything about their religion. They blame God for how they are treating other people. God never wanted people to be punished for something that they did as part of their humanness. You're a human being. You're perfect only in how you are. You are given a gift by the Creator, you bring forth your gift when you walk in balance with Mother Earth. When you walk out of balance — see the creation, how it sits today.

I hope that *The Hanging Sheet* will raise the consciousness of the audience to the plight of the federally sentenced women at the Prison for Women who are there because they've been battered and abused in the system. There are not very many support services for people who have made a mistake and are trying to get back out, and climb back over the people who won't forgive them. When I was in the prison I felt so terrible and helpless and powerless. I felt like I was being hurt on a different level by these people. I wanted to die as a result of that. I could not contain within myself this notion that some correction staff are not human. They can't feel. They don't know. They are so angry, they are so tormented. They are so full of rage and bitterness. These are not human beings. This is not humanness. I just could not understand people being that evil.

Not all of the people that I met inside that were working for corrections were like that. There are a lot of

CONT'D ON PAGE 3



PEER ADVOCACY
CONT'D.

social neglect, caused a panic inside the population. The Staff (which itself has an enormously high rate of seropositivity) was ignorant and dysfunctional in dealing with this set of problems. They participated with prisoners in creating a climate of vicious gossip. The greatest insult is to be "an AIDS carrying bitch." One woman, when it became common knowledge that she was HIV+, was beaten up and had her fingers broken for having shared a cigarette with another woman. Another woman was diagnosed HIV+ while in the D.C. Jail. She began to suffer severe gynecological symptoms. Because gynecological problems and illnesses are not recognized as opportunistic infections associated with HIV she was classified by the DOC as asymptomatic. Only months later she had a two-year life expectancy. When she applied for a sentence reduction based on her diagnosis as new information (she had a five year sentence) the D.C. Jail would not verify their initial classification/ diagnosis of her. Under the current parole and release guidelines of the DC

Out of a population of 500 women, 98% of whom are Black, 40% are HIV+. This figure is from a blind study conducted by the DC Department of Corrections (DC DOC). This study was never released. In 1990, from September through December, eight prisoners died while in custody, all from AIDS-related infections. The increase is staggering.

DOC there exists no form of compassionate or medical release. This woman has since died. She was in custody at the time of her death. Another woman died in the DC General Hospital prison ward, attached to a respirator while shackled to the bed.

The stories go on and on and the suffering goes on and on. The D.C. Jail may be considered extreme in the numbers of those who are HIV+ but it is not qualitatively different than other urban jails or detention centres. As the numbers of prisoners increase, and the length of time that people are incarcerated increases, the problem associated with PWA's in prison will increase. San Francisco, Dallas, New Orleans, Parish, Miami, they are all very similar. Like I said it's a particular form of hell.

As a result of these experiences we contacted the legal department of Whitman-Walker Clinic for help. We also contacted and referred prisoners to D.C. prisoners legal services. As a result of discussions, we proposed to the Clinic that they provide education and counselling to the women in the jail. We talked with Ms. Eisenberg, then legal director of the Clinic, and Ms. Lopes, director of PLS. The Clinic agreed and then met with the Chaplains of the Jail to work under the Chaplains' auspices. Once this was agreed to, the medical department was approached and their support enlisted.

The jail administration was agreeable to this because it meant that they did not have to take responsibility for creating policy towards women and AIDS. They were agreeable to it because it was being done by prisoner advocates and the outside organizations free of any financial obligations. They were agreeable to it because it helped stem the severe crisis in management they faced. Two women street outreach workers and AIDS counselors from Whitman-Walker, Sheila Burt and Beverly Fleming, began a pilot project in education and counselling for the women's units at the jail. This project consisted of weekly educationals on the units. It also included group discussion and individual counselling. While we were still in the jail we acted as recruiters for the program. This program is still functioning today.

This program was a small step, a beginning at the most basic of levels. The DC DOC at the level of medical care, mechanisms for early release, and strategies for community participation have yet to be seriously addressed. Orientation, education, treatment, participation in clinical trials, legal protection, staff training, parole and release, reintegration into the communities - are all part of a minimum program. But the DC DOC (like all prison systems) is more concerned with how sex in prison is an illegal act than using condoms to stop the spread of AIDS. The DC DOC and the health program is stretched to the limit and is incapable of performing triage medical care. The only way to change this is through a complete policy overhaul from the bottom to the top. To allow community input and contact, especially when the community is willing to do so. Without intervention of the outside organizations what hap-

pened at the D.C. Jail would never have been possible. The DC PLS commissioned medical expert Dr. R. Cohen, who is the head of medical services at St. Vincent's Hospital in New York, to examine the DC DOC system with regards to all aspects of care for HIV+ and AIDS prisoners. In his findings the DC DOC was ranked among the most inadequate in 14 different areas. The lesson of this experience is that only when the community is actively willing to take responsibility for its incarcerated members, and bring real organized pressure on the prison administrations and officials, and works in conjunction with the prisoners themselves who understand best what the problems and needs are, does change begin. It is only a small beginning.

Federal policy criticized

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) and its policy towards HIV+ prisoners and prisoners with AIDS has recently come under severe criticism from the national commission on AIDS. This presidential commission found that the counselling, treatment, and all AIDS engendered issues are not being adequately addressed. The commission stated that FBOP policy is so vague that it is unaccountable and unhelpful. They called for an examination of policy and its implementation. They castigated the BOP as the leadership of prisons in America for their woefully inadequate and excessively harsh treatment of prisoners with AIDS. The testimony from federal prisoners about life in the Feds when you have AIDS is equally horrible to the State prisons. In the federal prison system, once diagnosed with ARC or AIDS, men are sent to the Springfield hospital centre (now famous for its terrible medical care), and the women are sent to Lexington FCI to the prison hospital. Prisoners who advocate as PWA's are retaliated against, isolated and given inadequate care.

One main way this attack occurs is through what is called "diesel therapy". This is when a prisoner is lost in transit; when a prisoner is moved by bus from segregation unit to segregation unit. Sick prisoners are forced to travel on BOP buses separated from their families and their medication, and all forms of treatment. The BOP denies that they do

this, but hundreds of prisoners have experienced this. By the time they get to Springfield or Lexington they are that much sicker than they were, and removed from the institution where they were involved in advocacy work.

Marianna Experience

In December 1990, I was transferred to the maximum security women's control unit, in Marianna, Florida. This is a unique unit within the FBOP for women. It is the result of years of experimentation by the Feds in control units as the preferred form of incarceration. It is the most effective means they have developed to silence militant prisoners and bury the political prisoners, to deny that there is opposition to the government and to the conditions inside prisons. There are 90 of us here. There is a small turnover in population and the women are for the most part serving very long sentences; 10, 20, 30 years and some even longer. It is a unit where high risk behaviour is what landed people there. It is a population that needs to be educated about AIDS. Women here are affected both physically and psychologically in ways that are particular: the long sentences, the controlled life and the state of health that people entered the system with create very specific and very severe health situations. Sickness is one of the main reactions to our life here.

At the same time this is a population where AIDS and the crisis that it produces in people's lives is just one more thing. Many women here who have been in federal custody have suffered from various forms of cancer, many women have had complete or partial hysterectomies. Many women suffer from gynecological problems that range from excessive yeast infections to advanced forms of PID. This does not begin to address all the psychological manifestations.

When a woman arrives here she is medically screened. This includes mandatory testing for HIV. No permission is obtained. The test results are placed in the medical "jacket", and any medical person or administrator has access to one's medical records, except the prisoner, that is. There is no pre-test counselling. In the

CONT'D. ON PAGE 7

Special supplement on women and prison

Our purpose in doing a special supplement on women and prison was to not only examine the specific oppression of systemic sexism as experienced by women in the prison systems, but also to generally stimulate more writing by women, and deal with sex/gender oppression as one of the interlocking systems of oppression. We hope to integrate more of this awareness in the future: a special supplement does not "cover" these points as much as to attempt to *uncover* them and bring them to light.

Women are punished with psychiatric "medicine" both inside and outside prison: we would like to examine the system of medical psychiatry as a cornerstone of oppressive architecture.

The needs of HIV+ women and men must continue to receive our attention. The role of outside organizations, as Susan Rosenberg points out, is crucial in putting pressure on prison officials. Prisoners themselves must determine the needs for educa-

tion: how and what and by whom the education is conducted.

Rape and sexual abuse are so often part of women's stories. Probably they are also more a part of men's experiences than is normally recognized. Why men rape, why children are sexually abused: these questions signify part of the huge sickness of this society. To even speak about this is to fight back against the damage done: we have been told to keep quiet, so when we begin to speak, to write, we begin to change the pattern of abuse.

A very concrete example of change is the current interest in freeing women imprisoned for killing their abusers. The California coalition (see pg. 6) may help set a model for other regions. Although this is a current concern, the issues are not new at all, as anyone who remembers the Joann Little and Inez Garcia cases will recall.

One thing we know is missing from this supplement is an article on prostitutes and prison. Obviously there are differing opinions

on the sex trade in general; like any social phenomenon the political dimensions are not always simple or straightforward. But one thing seems clear (on the street level anyway): the sex trade, like the drug trade, is a fluid industry made to varying extents "legal" or "illegal" by state power, depending mainly on who profits. Therefore, those on the bottom rungs must be always expendable and characterized as somehow less than human to keep them expendable in the public eye. Female prostitutes who defend themselves from rape are treated even worse than non-prostitutes, although if your job is selling car insurance and your car is stolen, your own insurance would still be good, one would assume. In a current Toronto case, the accused rapist is a cop, and the woman, who turns tricks but is not dependent on prostitution for a living, and who happens to be fairly well connected to activist lawyers, has taken her case through the police inquiry process and concludes that it's not worth it. Small comfort for those less well-connected. ∞

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Deadline for the next issue is March 10th.



WOMEN AND PRISON

I. How prisons reinforce white male supremacy

LAURA WHITEHORN

Amerikkka is a prisonhouse of oppressed nations and peoples, and its prisons are geared to serve and reinforce the brutality of that oppression. Readers of Bulldozer know that, and have made a commitment to fight the prison system along with the rest of the imperialist system.

How the prisons reinforce male supremacy and women's oppression in particular, and how the term "political prisoner" is defined and applied, might be less universally agreed on. Rushing to meet the deadline for the women's issue of Bulldozer, I'd like to throw a few ideas into the discussion.

The repression of women through the "criminal justice system" in general and the prisons in particular is intensely political: enforce women's powerlessness and inequality; enforce our role as sex objects and reproducers of a passive and cooperative workforce/population; prevent the potential for rebellion and resistance on the part

of women from becoming a reality; reinforce national oppression and white supremacy.

Racism plays a most central role in all of this and not only by preventing the necessary unity and solidarity among women prisoners from developing. Women's prison is an unending barrage of reminders that a woman in the U.S. is what she looks like, is worth what she wears. The closer she comes to white-defined and white supremacist standards of beauty and behaviour, the better her chances of advancement, survival, and ultimately, release. Because being in prison means having every move, every moment, every step watched, judged, recorded and controlled, when I say "racism," I'm not referring to something that happens once in a while, when a white prisoner or guard makes a racist remark. I'm talking about the fabric of life, every second of every day — everything from who gets away with cutting ahead in a line, to who gets medical attention, to the tone of voice guards use towards a prisoner,

to how likely a prisoner is to get written up or sent to the hole for infractions of the rules.

And it doesn't stop with racism — it goes on to the reinforcement of national oppression as a whole. The humiliation and degradation of African American women in the white-defined social value system of the BOP (Bureau of Prisons) is an attack on the Black Nation's survival. It goes without saying that, for an African American woman in the BOP, nationalist politics and behaviour (let alone organization) is discouraged and punished (if it can't be co-opted). For African women from the continent of Africa, imprisonment mimics the conditions of slavery: at Lexington, women from the same African country are separated into different housing units. When this policy was challenged by a woman from The Ivory Coast, the prison administration responded that a Nigerian woman who lived in her unit (and who spoke English, not French — the colonial language of The Ivory Coast) was "from the same country as you: Africa."



Our powerlessness, and how intimately it's connected to our sexuality, is continually enforced in prison. There is literally no place where a prisoner at FCI Lexington can shower, dress, or use the bathroom without the chance of being observed by a male guard. Male guards routinely pat search women prisoners. It's all as routine as rape and sexual objectification are on the streets — but here, the avenues of protest are strictly limited. If you object to having a man guard put his hands on you, you go to the hole, lose your good days, lose your cell, lose your job and whatever pay grade you've reached, etc. etc. The purpose, like that on the street, is to destroy self-esteem: you are only valued as a sex object, and you are so powerless that

you can't even protect your own body, can't even defend your own dignity. While the role of "mother" is assumed, the ability to relate to and influence the lives of our children is torn from us. Women who give birth in the federal system are separated from their babies after 24 hours.

Like society as a whole, the prison system has reacted against women's liberation and the revolutionary social struggles of the years since the 60s. This has two main prongs.

First, the revolutionary resistance movements and the government's repression of them resulted in a marked increase in the number of women political prisoners and Prisoners of War behind the walls. The control units for women — first in Davis Hall at Alderson, then in the High Security Unit here at Lex, and now in the expanded and modified control unit at Marianna — have been the BOP's response. In those units, sexist and homophobic attacks play a particular role in the effort to strip women political prisoners and POW's of our political identity. In the Lex HSU, Alejandrina Torres, Silvia Baradini and Susan Rosenberg were given a uniform of culottes, and told by the warden that he'd chosen new sweatsuits for them that were especially "feminine." Two of the comrades got a 205 (a write-up for a "sex act") for hugging good night. The Guardian and some other left publications were

CONT'D ON PAGE 4

The Hanging Sheet

CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

good people at the Prison for Women who work there. But what's the good of all these good people if they can't do anything to correct the deviant behaviour of their fellow workers that are a handful in number, but are so evil and so mean that they can keep all these good people in fear and intimidation. That's a form of systematic abuse and that's the environment at the Prison for Women.

I made two attempts to hang myself. The first attempt was...well, I changed my mind. But I still stripped my sheet, tied the knot and made the action to do it, and I didn't jump off. That was because I felt, "They're never ever going to forgive me anyways. I'm so fucking bad I might as well do whatever I want to do, and that's how they want me to be. Because I can't find comfort from my stress in drugs, and I can't find comfort from my distress in alcohol the same way they do. I cannot go on. I simply cannot bear to take this pain and rather than becoming something I'm not, I'm just going to do this." That's how much it hurt. My sisters were feeling the same way. They missed their home, their family, the outside, the earth.

Q Is it the same way there now?

No, right now it's worse. All the women are segregated. They're forcibly moved one range over to another range and made it a special handling unit for women, because they could not deal with the women

expressing their pain. When they had the resistance in February and they came running over with their tear gas and mace — the goon squad from Kingston Penitentiary [a nearby men's prison, Ed.], my sisters stood in a circle around a garbage can, on their knees and sang (at this point Therasa dropped to the floor and beat her knee and sang.) They just stood in front of the barrier. They just wanted to see their elder. It's like being an animal in a cage, and you're chewing off your paws to be free. We were cutting off our air to be free. Women were slashing themselves to be free of the pain because they did not want to project it outward. In the way that they walked they did not want to hurt anybody.

Q Is there a lot of community within the prison?

Yes, there has been a lot of closeness and humanness between the [native] sisterhood and we were growing strong in our power to be women, to say, "No! We are not going to be the victims any more!" And to feel that in such a negative environment...It's very clear that women are being oppressed not only as women in the system, but because they have a culture that reminds the people that are keeping them that they are human and they don't want to be reminded of that.

It's nice to have a Correctional Services uniform on so you can stand and lock people in a cage, so you can stand behind the immunity of that while imparting cruel and unusual punishment upon already abused women. It's bad enough inside — just imagine when you get out and the parole board tells you, "No, I don't think that going to Toronto will be good for you, and we're not letting you go. We don't care if it's Christmas and you're looking for

your son, you're just not going. I don't care if you haven't been out of prison for fifteen years, you're not getting a pass to go to Toronto to see your family until someone tells us that it's OK to let you out."

While you're there you can't have any of your humanness. You have to check all that at the front door when you came in. This is advice I could give to women that continue to speak out about issues of abuse in the system, this could very well happen to you. My advice to you is: before you go there (and I'm forewarning you of the treatment that will happen if you ever get into a place like that) take your humanness, all of it that you can muster up and leave it at the door, because you are never going to be ever be able to use it while you are inside the Correctional Services of Canada penitentiaries.

It's like a big rock, and I'm a little drop of water that keeps falling from the sky, and one of these days it's going to chip. Something's going to happen. Prisoners themselves are going to change the system from within. What better knowledge can one have about what happens inside, and how better to correct or deter. "Kill me, I don't care, but please don't do that to me!" When I put that sheet around my head that's what I thought I was doing. I was doing society a favour. I didn't want them paying forty or fifty or sixty thousand dollars a year out of their taxes to contain me in a place like that!

There is a lot of room for change, but it's going to happen from within. People are paying the taxes for the federal justice system whose job it is to make better, law-abiding citizens of the

people in its care. I think these people that are paying an arm and a leg for the protection they're given should take a long hard look at how these people are going to be when they get out. Because when they get out feeling that they've been punished all those years, that society did that, then there's going to be a lot of blood running. You're going to be releasing very angry, suppressed, oppressed people, and anything will make them rise to resistance.

You have to start getting more programs inside, and I see hope for that. There are some programs, and the public thinks that this is happening but really, it's not. How can you heal inside a prison wall with twenty-six bars and a burlap sheet that contain you from the world outside.

Going to school — education — that's where it's at.

I like to call myself a graduate prisoner. I graduated from the school of crime. There were a lot of things I never knew before I went in there, but I could do fraud now. Not that I would ever use any of this stuff, but now I could pick locks, all kinds of things. So it was quite a learning experience for me because I never ever thought I would have this knowledge, because it would not ever have been part of my life.

Education is my weapon to combat the government. Everybody comes out carrying some weapon. Some people go right out and buy a gun for protection because nobody is

CONT'D ON PAGE 6





Prison Transfer - War

My generation will remember
in an instant the photo
100 children piled in a ditch,
naked and bloody.

An Asian forest made bare from defoliants,
no leaves only bodies.

The caption read MY LAI MASSACRE

My generation will remember Lt. Calley and his defense
"I was carrying out my superiors' orders."

And it's true, he was, carrying out orders.

This same generation never healed from the consequences
of that unjust war.

No reparations were paid, no relations restored, no bilateral
discussions held. Once the enemy always the enemy,
particularly if the enemy wins.

Monuments went up to pay homage to the dead.

(And even that was too late)

Marble to substitute for international law,

Rhetoric in place of resources and respect.

Apocalyptic movies were made at great cost, and with great
profit,

text books were written, history reworked to fit the current
time.

But the questions remain

Who won? Why were we there? Was this genocide?

Doesn't agent orange kill more than trees?

The generals learned too. Better than we.

Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua, Iraq.

Iraq.

The Vietnamese people are suffering still, as they will, until
someone takes responsibility.

Yesterday while in transit in a prison van in chains and shackles,
I thought of war.

Beside me a woman sat, a woman born ten years after me in
1965 in Saigon.

A Vietnamese woman named Lynn was a prisoner too.

Her handcuffed wrists immobilized by the Black Box
(used only in special cases).

Wrists framed with bright purple scars from slashing.

By whom I could only guess.

And as I looked at this woman from Vietnam

born in Saigon but raised on

McDonalds I knew she was sick, I knew she was dying.

A victim of war.

This Vietnamese woman born in Saigon to an american father
who abandoned her
now suffers from AIDS dementia.

AIDS dementia which caused her to attack a white man
and kill him with his own gun.

This once delicate young woman with AIDS, demented, in
chains, en route to her death,
in a prison van. A victim of war.

Which war?

I do not know

Wasn't Lt. Calley only following orders?

And doesn't agent orange kill more than trees?

Susan Rosenberg #03684-016

PMB 7007, Shawnee Unit

Marianna, FL 32446

How prisons reinforce white male supremacy

CONT'D. FROM PAGE 3

excluded because they were deemed to "promote homosexuality". Alex and Susan were subjected to the equivalent of rape – a forced, invasive cavity search – by a male physicians' assistant as a "security procedure" when they were en route to Lex.

The other prong of the reactionary response to social struggles is connected to the repression of political prisoners because it consists of increased "security" and repression against all women prisoners, particularly involving speech, access to the community, and more extensive control over movement (and therefore association) within the prisons. At least, this is true here at Lex, where there seems to be a serious HSU hangover. A few examples: women are regularly sent to the hole or otherwise punished for speaking to visiting representatives of the regional BOP, for criticizing U.S. policies, for verbally objecting to prison procedures. Last week, 3 women were sent to the hole for "inciting to riot", because they had warned the rest of us not to eat the hamburgers at lunch one day. (The lunch line had to be closed to remove the meat because it was rotten.) We are locked down, in various areas of the prison, for 50 minutes out of every hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No independent prisoner association or grouping is permitted. There is no dancing allowed.

Then there's the homophobia. It goes without saying that the hand-holding between two prisoners that was permitted when there were men and women prisoners here is now strictly forbidden. If two women are suspected of being lovers – or even very close friends – they will be separated into different housing units. The halls of the units are constantly patrolled by male guards whose explicit mission is to "stop the 'bull-dagging'."

Above and beyond this is the religious onslaught against lesbianism – a message repeated on a weekly basis in sermons and Bible study. The chapel is the one place where community is promoted – at least in name. But the "community" is not just straight, it's virulently anti-lesbian.

Being vocal about being a lesbian during the Resistance Conspiracy in the D.C. Jail (Washington, D.C.) involved some uncomfortable moments and a few blatant homophobic incidents. But here at Lex, it's a whole different animal. I am often treated like monster or some malignant entity. When a reporter from the local mainstream newspaper interviewed me recently, I took a deep breath and made a point of talking about being a lesbian. But I have to admit I was slightly relieved to find that that didn't get mentioned in the final article.

The rejection of male identification and the deep affirmation of womanhood in lesbianism are seen and acted on as a big threat to the BOP. This goes along with the consistent erosion of self-esteem – something so pervasive to prison life it would take pages and pages to detail it.

Prison punishes by isolating the prisoner and making her invisible to her family, children and community. It also punishes by making us invisible to ourselves: attacking our self-esteem means attacking our self-awareness and pride. The most bothersome aspects of women to the system are rendered the most invisible: lesbians, political prisoners, strong and proud African American women. These identities only exist in the BOP as categories for punishment: lesbians are

"bull-daggers," political prisoners/POW's are "terrorists," and proud Black women are "trouble-makers." Keeping our identities alive, nourishing them and one another, is an act of survival and resistance. Another identity suppressed in women's prison is the HIV+ woman who is fighting to live and be strong. That is an issue for all prisoners, but for women it's particular, because so much of the society as well as the medical establishment ignores women when dealing with AIDS.

So, all of this – in addition to the pervasive lack of opportunity, education, etc. – is intensely political. The rising number of women doing long time (a result of the new sentencing guidelines and mandatory minimums) is also very political. And many people argue that the women who are imprisoned for fighting their oppression by resisting attack – killing an abusive boyfriend, pimp, or husband; hiding a child from a molesting father, etc. – are political prisoners. I think it's important to trace and expose and keep clearly in mind the political nature of the "criminal justice system" as it oppresses women. But I want to argue that, without in any way belittling the courage or the oppression of women "social" pris-



oners, the movement should maintain a more stringent definition of political prisoner.

First, briefly, I think that definition is: one who is imprisoned for conscious acts of resistance against the U.S. government and imperialist system, or who is unjustly imprisoned (framed) because of beliefs and actions that were not in themselves "illegal." I also think the definition should include women who were imprisoned for non-political offenses but whose conscious actions and work inside the prisons have brought them into conflict with the system and added time and harsh conditions to their imprisonment. (Fighting the government and struggling for social change inside the prison system is a political act.)

I hope this definition (which I think many of my comrade political prisoners and POW's would agree with) is one that is not elitist or exclusive, but



one that can help us build the movement to free all political prisoners and POW's and build revolutionary resistance.

The reason I think it's important to limit the definition in this way is that, as a revolutionary and an organizer, I think the element of consciousness, of choice, of exercising responsibility to try to change things for more than just yourself, is at the heart of both political action and the overturning of oppression. The prison system of co-optation, of rewards and punishment, encourages women to narrow our world of choice to a series of decisions on hair style, make-up and clothing. To act consciously in a wider realm is frowned upon if not forbidden. This is the element most under attack in prison. It's why I've been warned over and over in the 6+ years I've been locked up, "worry about yourself, do your time. Don't worry about other prisoners." How capitalist!

Rejecting these warnings, rejecting the BOP/U.S. government version of the proper woman, involves risk. But so does all struggle. And that's my point: recognizing that we are not the vicious stupid criminals the system makes us out to be. It means recognizing that we are victimized by imperialism. But calling all women in prison "political prisoners" denies our own responsibility for making choices and taking risks to change our own lives. If there's one loud, clear message of world events this year, it's that you can't give someone power. Remember The Last Poets' line, "The Revolution will not be televised"? If that weren't true, there wouldn't be TV sets in the cells in the control units. It's precisely to deny our ability to be responsible for our lives and for change that the prisons try to threaten and crush us into meekly fulfilling our "proper" sex role as women. The element of choice and consciousness should be preserved when we define political prisoner – and it should help us to build an inclusive and powerful resistance movement. We need that. ∞

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California Coalition Formed

The California Coalition for Battered Women in Prison (CCBWP) is a collection of individuals and groups who have recently organized to plan a strategy for assisting battered women in prison seeking clemency/commutation of their sentences. The CCBWP is currently drafting a procedure by which battered women in prison can request clemency or commutation from the governor. The CCBWP is also recruiting pro bono attorneys to assist these women in preparation of their requests, and is seeking to identify all battered women

currently serving terms in California state prisons.

The CCBWP has formed five committees: 1) development of clemency/commutation of sentence process and materials, 2) identification of women in prison for killing their abusers, 3) pro bono (recruiting attorneys), 4) fund raising, and 5) media/press. For general information, contact Ellen Barry or Minouche Kardel at (415) 255-7036, or write Out Of Control, Box 30, 3543 18th St., San Francisco, CA. 94110.

from Out of Time



WOMEN AND PRISON

II. Women against prison

Excerpted from Catalyst, Crime and Punishment issue #3, 1991, published by Student Initiatives in Community Health, an Australian group. PNS received this excellent publication from DC SCAR (Student Coalition Against Racism.)

One of the myths about female imprisonment is that women "get off lightly". The relatively low number of female prisoners is sometimes cited as evidence of this myth.

It is true that women make up only a small proportion of the prison population. However, this is best explained by the fact that there are so many other forms of social control that may be wielded against women, so much so that other aspects of our lives in the community resemble that of imprisoned men. For example:

- As a general rule, men live free from fear of rape except in prison. Women live their lives in fear of attack and modify their behaviour accordingly.

- In prison, mood altering drugs are used as a means of controlling prisoners. In the general community, women are twice as likely to be prescribed tranquilizers as men with the same symptoms.

- Violence experienced by male prisoners resembles domestic violence. The male prisoner is subject to the physical control of others who may exercise force against him ... If a prisoner dares to complain he is likely to be disbelieved and risks retaliation...

- Lack of childcare facilities mean that many women are "trapped"; at home.

- In prison, one's every action is controlled by rules and regulations. In the home, many women have their daily routines dictated by their male partners.

Women Offenders

There is no evidence that women "get off lightly" when charged or questioned about offences. Apart from the general psychological and physical abuse that takes place in police custody, women are almost inevitably subject to abuse of a sexual nature. This abuse includes comments regarding appearance, such as "you're a dog", comments of sexual nature, such as "you're a slut, a whore" and can include physical assault, attack or rape. Threats about children, if the woman is a mother, such as "We'll make sure you never see them again" add to pressure on women in police custody. As over 80% of police officers are male, a woman is almost inevitably subject to the control of a group of men, which is, in itself, intimidating.

Likewise, there is no evidence that women "get off lightly" before the courts. In fact women are more likely to [go to jail] for a first offence than men. In addition, lack of childcare for those sentenced to community based orders means that women are in particular danger of breaching these orders and being sent to prison. ...

About 80% of the offences women go to prison for are drug related. Most women in prison have suffered great social disadvantage prior to their imprisonment, such as homelessness and poverty, with the majority being unemployed before their imprisonment, having little formal education and few formal qualifications. Needless to say, prison does nothing to improve these women's positions. After imprisonment they have the additional handicap of the stigma attached to ex-prisoners.

Many female prisoners have themselves been the victims of serious violent crimes, such as incest and rape, which have been ignored by the legal system. A study in NSW estimated that about 80% of women in prison had been victims of incest.

Women in prison

Once sentenced to prison, women generally endure worse conditions than men. Women inevitably have less access to education, recreation, employment, training and health services than their male counterparts.

Separation from children is particularly painful ... most male prisoners can depend on any children they have being cared for by the child's mother. ... The high rate of suicide amongst female prisoners is an epitaph to suffering.

However, to talk only of the differences between women's and men's imprisonment, to argue for the recognition of women's

needs or equal opportunity for female prisoners, or even to argue the case for the abolition of women's imprisonment is too narrow an agenda.

Women as victims of crime

Prisons are popularly thought to be part of the solution to violent crime in the community. This has a certain appeal to most women because women are often the victims of violent crime. Many women, who are actively seeking social change, have worked around issues of violence against women such as incest, rape and domestic violence. We have been rightly outraged at these crimes against women and children and have sometimes been appalled at the ease with which the men who commit these crimes either avoid detection, fail to be charged, are found not guilty, or, if convicted, are given relatively light sentences.

...Police have argued that if they are to assist in the charging of perpetrators of domestic violence, then they need extra powers ... When they have been given extra powers in the arena [of domestic violence], they have simply refused to use them. While police are willing to use female victims of crime to pursue their own agenda there is clear evidence that they support the structures and stereotypes which oppress women and therefore ensure that they will continue to be victims of crimes... A Victorian discussion paper on the police and sexual assault found that attitudes ... remain sexist, stereotyped and judgmental, leading to the danger of unnecessarily distressing and alienating those female victims who come forward, and discouraging others from reporting crimes.

It is often pointed out that men, if convicted of violent crimes against women, only receive relatively light prison sentences. This is taken up in the context of the law and order debate as further fuel for the arguments for longer and harsher prison terms. However, this is to miss the fundamental point that the legal system is designed to protect male property rights and not to protect the victims of violent crime, unless the violent crime is also a violation of male property rights. If someone rapes or assaults [a man's] wife or daughter, or a black man rapes a white woman, then the legal system may take the crime seriously. This explains why the crimes of marital rape, criminal assault in the home and incest are largely ignored. Efforts to protect women and children are largely confined to pursuing strangers despite the fact that most violence against women and children is committed by men they know...

Men in prison

Prisons are not full of rapists and bashers, but rather men who have committed crimes against property. Only one in six men has been imprisoned for a violent offence. Like women, many of these men have been the victims of violent crimes which have been ignored by the legal system [such as physical and sexual abuse].

That is not to say that we should ignore the fact that some men who commit violent crimes against women are in prison. However, we must ask who those men are and where they come from. A study in NSW found

The Building With So Many Panes

If you should look in the World Book of Records, you will find my place of residence listed among other amazing feats of our vast Universe.

What? you might ask is so important about this place where I live, that it should find its way into the World Book of Records. Don't be shy about asking. I did. I found someone walking along, and I stopped them and asked, "What is it about this place that it holds some kind of world record?"

"Don't you know?," was the reply of this person. "Why, this place holds more pain in it than any place in the world." With that statement, she was gone, leaving me somewhat bewildered, but as I looked around I saw ...

A little old lady in an old wheelchair

With so little life left, all she could do is stare.

I saw a pregnant lady, then I saw her tears.

It seems her time was about here.

After nine months spent with her only joy

She was about to lose her little boy.

I saw someone break down right in front of my eyes,
She had just found out her mother had died.

"I never had a chance to say my good-byes,"

I barely made out between her cries.

I've seen tears of pain and tears of sorrow,

Tears without any hope of tomorrow.

I've seen women doing life, women without love,

Women without hope, for forgiveness from above.

I've seen pain of arthritis, all kinds of disease.

The pain of dead leaves, falling from the trees.

I've seen the blacks with the blacks,

the whites with the whites.

I've seen the pain of the bruises,

After the fights.

I've seen the pain in their faces

As they read their mail

The pain of it all as they realize their hell.

I've seen them cry and scream "It ain't fair"

I've seen them get quiet when they realize no one cares.

She was right you know ... This place carries more pain in it than I've seen before.

Note: F.C.I. Lexington is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for having the most individual window panes

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July 1991

While her crime may appear slight, think of her not as the accused but as a woman who has betrayed all the essential feminine virtues, transgressed the inviolate laws of womanhood, destroyed the almost holy values invested in her as mother, daughter, sister, in short as woman and blah blah blah...





Marilyn Buck Three Poems

I.

My sister lives across a line
I know she's there
My heart lifts to hear her
in brief encounters through the wall
a whispering space
for stolen words.
She lives there through the glass
I glimpse her days
she glimpses mine
but we can not meet.

September 1988

II.

Behind razor-wired walls
the moon shimmered in the late summer sky
spilling over in its pale brightness
it drew me dizzily into its fullness
washed my eyes in quicksilver
and slipped into my soul
Now moon-bereft nights find me weeping
tears well up in old wounds
dry passive craters
from those dark recessed pools
despair emerges
a dark irradiated presence
swallowing starlight
and suns
spitting them out
steel needles probing loneliness
My soul careens into the walls
wailing
till pain tires
and the pale moon of memory
appears behind my eye
to bring me home.

July 1990

III.

FASHION STATEMENT

In the 1960s Vietnamese children
their fine-boned beauty profiled in horror
ran down roads burning
draped in napalm.

What are the children of Iraq wearing this year?
Do they gleam of phosphorous
in cratered ruins?
Or do they trail liquid-red chiffon
down the streets?

The fashion editors have abandoned Baghdad
dressed in desert storm fatigues.
There is no news to report.

February 1991

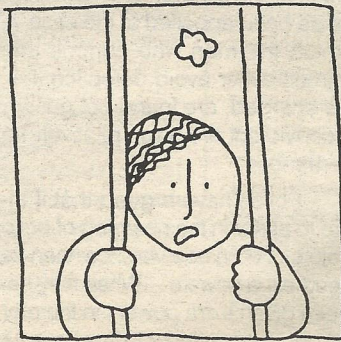
Women against prisons

CONT'D FROM PAGE 5

that a large number of men in adult prisons had spent time in youth institutions. Men or boys go to prison for property crimes merely because they need protection and become so brutalised that they become dangerous and thus create the rationale for the very system that created them. Prisons are brutal places and they create brutal people.

Men released from prisons go

At least I have feminism
to show me I'm more like
a political prisoner than a
criminal



back to wives, mothers, lovers and sisters who are left to cope with the damage. Women thus become victims of male imprisonment.

Uniforms, guns, handcuffs, bars, razor wire and batons are all powerful symbols of a system which signals, to those in a position of power, that force is legitimate.

The Criminal Justice System

By supporting imprisonment we are supporting the criminal "justice" system which accounts for enormous amounts of government budgets... More money in the criminal "justice" system means less money in other areas such as health, education, transport, housing and the like, which benefit women and reduce social problems which lead to imprisonment in the first place.

What of the men who work in the system? Prisons run on a

rigid hierarchy and it is the warders role to impose discipline and administer punishment. These employees participate or witness many acts of violence every day. The same applies to men who work in the police force. The values and experiences of work are carried over into personal relationships.

It is not necessary to work in the system or be a victim of it to be affected by its emblems, however.

Conclusion

Given the fear generated by male violence and the prospect of male violence, it is no wonder that we are looking for powerful allies to protect us. Some of us feel safer believing that there are men, with guns and with the power to order people to be locked away, who are "in charge". Some of us would ring the police if we felt in imminent danger of being attacked. Many of us would want the perpetrators of violence against us, or other women, to be locked away, punished.

It is an old trick to make women so terrified of the prospect of male violence that we are convinced that we need protection from other men. The only problem is that these other men are then given power over us, so that they can protect us, and we find then that we are their victims. By relying on "them" to protect us we forget what "they" are really talking about and miss the real challenge of taking things into our own hands.

*The Women Against Prison Collective
reprinted from Legal Service Bulletin
Vol. 15 No. 1, Feb. 1990.*

The Hanging Sheet

CONT'D. FROM PAGE 3

ever going to hurt them again. Some run right to the spirit of alcohol and say that they don't care. Others go out and they are totally devastated and they usually commit suicide within a year. Then there are those that want to change things. Those who want to educate others by sharing their experience. That's how my experience is working for me. I was illiterate, I came out with a second year university standing. I'm moving into a pos-

itive way, out of the negative. I'm de-programming myself. I can say that I'm doing very well. Queen's University has been very supportive and I'm very grateful.

My grandmother and my grandfather on my mother's side are Portuguese and Micmac. So my mother and father are half-breeds and I'm mixed into that somehow. (*She sings*) "I am an aboriginal Canadian. My hair's not black and my eyes are not brown. I'm a child of assimilation, when they drove two cultures into the ground." I'm sort of mixed between two cultures. I was raised with a great respect for the earth and I had no idea of what existed beyond my world of rivers and trees. I was surrounded by water, in a circle, Newfoundland.

I knew the land, I knew the water. I knew the sky, the ground, the air, the sun, the moon, the stars, the fish, the rocks, the grass, the trees and all things living. I only knew those things. I didn't know much about the concrete city, the lost people walking on the grey concrete. It confused me when I first came into contact with progress.

Q: What do you want people to take with them when they leave the play?

I want them to leave with a sense that prison is not the answer for abused women. I want them to leave with a sense of their humanness. ∞

Reprinted from Surface, a Queen's University student publication.



MOVE Press Release

To quote John Africa: "When your reference is right, you ain't got to run from it, hide from it, make excuses for it, ain't got to make no deals, allow for mistakes, negotiate a compromise, involve yourself in some concession - true law stands on its own. In front of anybody on whatever level, this is the meanin' of truth, real faith, absolute safety, consistent belief."

Mayoral candidate Ed Rendell has been notified that I intend to depose him in connection with the civil law suit I have filed against him, Wilson Goode, Gregore Sambor and other city officials involved in the May/13/85 bombing and murder of me and my MOVE family. Rendell says he's "unavailable" to be deposed by me til after the election; MOVE ain't accepting that. Rendell is obviously running scared, and with good reason; Rendell is scared to come face to face with committed MOVE people, which is why he's refused to meet with us over the past 10 years, because he's committed so much crime against MOVE that he's petrified of being exposed, especially before the election, and possibly having his entire political career go down the drain. Rendell have spit on the very legal laws he demand that others respect and adhere to, the very legal laws he claim to pros-

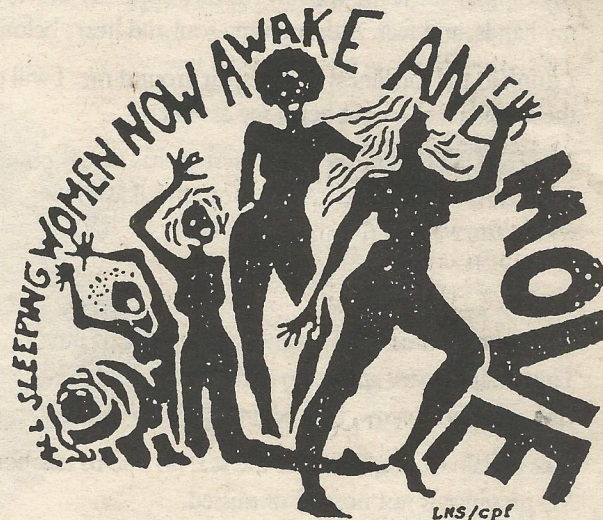
ecute MOVE and thousands of non-MOVE people for violating. Rendell have conspired against this Organization ever since he was district attorney, he is largely responsible for my 9 innocent sisters and brothers being unjustly sentenced to 30-100 years in prison, and for my 11 innocent sisters and brothers (including 5 children) being burnt alive. This criminal misfit was a key player in both major confrontations between MOVE and this system, and because what he did is so dirty, so vicious, ugly and criminal, he don't want to own up to it now. That's the difference between MOVE and Rendell, that's the difference between being right and being wrong. When you right you don't care who knows what you do and you can explain your position, but when you wrong you don't want nobody to know it and don't want to be questioned about it because you have plenty to hide.

Rendell is trying to duck this deposition because he knows he's dirty, criminal, and he don't want to face indicting questions about his district attorney's office causing the August 8th confrontation by illegally obtaining criminal warrants against MOVE from civil court judge G. Fred DiBona in Aug/78, in criminal cases *already* assigned to judges William Marutani and James

McDermott in the criminal trial division of the court system; questions about him knowingly prosecuting innocent MOVE people for the Aug/8/78 murder of policeman James Ramp even though MOVE's house (which is vital evidence in MOVE's defense) was deliberately destroyed by police; questions about how *nine* MOVE people were convicted of murder, of shooting *one* bullet into James Ramp, especially when they have no weapons charges on 'em; questions about how MOVE could have killed Ramp when he was standing on street level facing MOVE, we were in the basement and he was shot in the back of the neck and the bullet travelled downward; questions about his own ballistics tests being incomplete and only indicating that the fatal bullet came from a mini-ruger 14, which *police* used on Aug/8. These are some of the indicting questions Rendell don't want to fact, not coming from MOVE, because he can't divert us or get around us and he know it. Rendell didn't stop his criminal conspiracy against this Organization with the 1978 confrontation, he went on to conspire with Phila. officials in 1985 to eliminate this Organization. Rendell conspired with then-judge (now district attorney) Lynn Abraham to get warrants issued against me and 3 of my sisters and

brothers on trumped up charges, providing so called justification for attacking us on May/13, just as he did in 1978, but every one of those trumped up charges used as the excuse for bombing us and murdering my family was dismissed as invalid before I went to trial on May/13 charges.

CONT'D ON PAGE 8



Peer Advocacy

CONT'D. FROM PAGE 2

admissions and orientation program there is a video available on request. It is an outdated, inaccurate and male defined video. If someone tests positive then the psychology department is advised of their status and it is left to the person to come forward for help. No one here is public about their status. No one here is visibly sick. Many people know people or have family who are HIV+. Little is understood about the disease or about general information. The Staff is as ignorant about all of this as the population.

Upon arrival I proposed to the administration that we begin an AIDS workshop to educate and give out information. For various reasons the team responsible for running this unit agreed. In February 1991, under the auspices of the counselling program, we began an AIDS information and awareness workshop. It ran for 6 weeks with 15 women and it had 100% attendance. It was the first for this unit, and for women in the FBOP. The struggle to create this group was a struggle against maximum security conditions and against the entrenched and fearful bureaucracy. Ground rules had to be established from the beginning. Our position was that if we could not talk about methods of prevention without intervention, and if confidentiality was not to be respected, then there was no point in doing it. We needed to know that we could

discuss sex and drugs and condoms and dental dams and bleach without the administration fearing that a discussion of these issues was promoting all of that behavior. At first the administration wanted to use me to find the HIV positive women, and thereby compromise my role as an advocate. But we fought it out in several planning meetings and ended up agreeing that as long as I didn't do medical work, and that a counsellor would sit in on the group and monitor the sessions, we would go ahead.

Groups on the outside, particularly the NPP/ACLU, sent us information and videos. Again, like in DC, without the active support of AIDS workers and organizations on the outside this would never have been possible.

We started this group with the question of how many people would feel all right with having a cellmate who was HIV+. In the beginning two people raised their hands.

When we finished the group we asked the same question and everyone said they were all right with it. I believe that they were being honest. We have now begun a new group that is in all Spanish for the Latina population here. Two of the women who were in the first group are now translating and helping to lead this Spanish language group. They will be able to do AIDS education and advocacy themselves when we complete this next group. It is a successful project and one that is needed. And yet like in the DC experience it is only a baby step, a beginning. The needs are so great and there is a divide between administrations' willingness to have

education happen and for there to be effective medical care.

Being involved in this educational work, understanding how to break down information, and begin to build trust in order to challenge behavior is not easy. Out of this effort I believe that programs like ACE in NY and the one here, and the others that are beginning in Pleasanton FCI and in other state prisons need to share our experiences.

We need to communicate with each other, because advocating from the inside and educating from the inside is different than the same work on the outside. I would hope that people on the outside involved in prison work would help make this kind of dialogue and network possible. Without active support to us we cannot overcome the conditions and the repressive restrictions. Without united pressure and struggle we cannot force backward administrations into expanding the limits imposed. The racism, the misogyny, the homophobia and anti-lesbianism, the demonization of third world people, the criminalization of addiction and substance abuse, the lowered expectations that are a product of an unjust and unequal society are all internalized by us in prison. Doing this work can be one way to take back what is ours - our fullest selves.

Women's Treatment Agenda

The women's caucus of NY ACT-UP has put forward a women's treatment agenda. It is a progressive and positive agenda. It is based on an objective assessment of needs in various

We started this group with the question of how many people would feel all right with having a cellmate who was HIV+. In the beginning two people raised their hands ... When we finished the group we asked the same question and everyone said they were all right with it. I believe that they were being honest.

women's state prisons. It is an agenda that as a peer advocate prisoner I fully support. However, I believe that any program is only as good as its implementation. The challenge that AIDS in prisons pose are fundamental to the society's ideas of punishment and justice. For the reactionary right-wing elements who are currently in control of the criminal justice system, AIDS in prison is viewed as "population control", a form of natural selection: the ultimate solution to the problem of what to do with the excess of Black, Latin, Native American, and poor people who make up the over 1,000,000 prisoners in the United States.

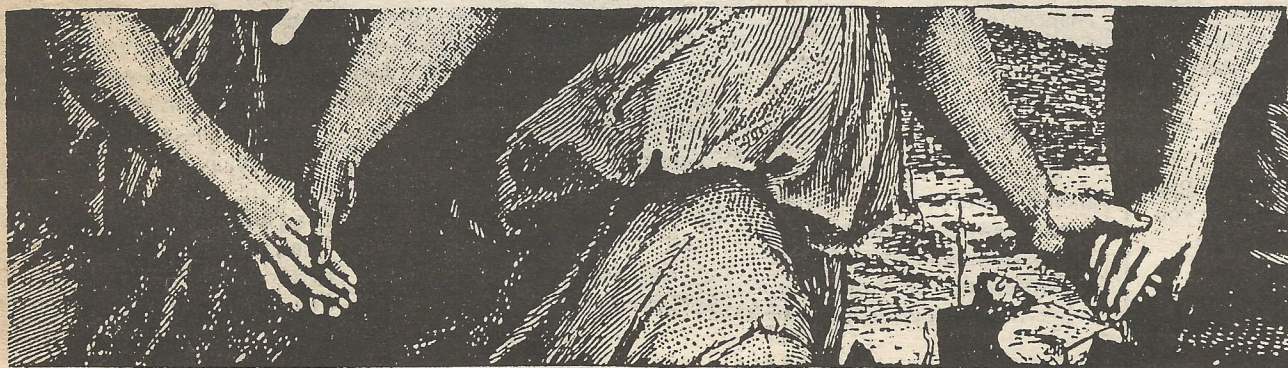
Outside support

Segregation, isolation, control and punishment of prisoners is the equivalent of a policy of quarantine of "High Risk" groups on the outside. That this policy and treatment is acceptable to the society for prisoners is an indicator of how successful the government has been in creating a whole exiled community. Buried and exiled. Medical release, parole release, compassionate release, mechanisms for release from prison, and strategies for reintegration into the communities from which we come is the most important programmatic demand that can be made by those of the outside. When people in prison are viewed as

incarcerated members of the community and not stigmatized as the "others", the wall between the inside and outside comes down even if only a small bit. The demand to monitor the prisons by civilians is a beginning towards holding the prison system accountable for its treatment and mistreatment of those in prison. The idea that outside medical personnel be responsible for the administration of the particular treatment for PWA's, that PWA's participate in clinical trials with third party control are again the only way that those concerned can break the unnecessary punitive elements that define the current prison system.

The lower life expectancy for prisoners with AIDS than people in the free world with AIDS is because of the quality of care and treatment, what one has access to medically, nutritionally, psychologically and the stress created by the loss of freedom - all can most effectively be worked with in freedom. Reintegration into the communities implies involvement in the lives of prisoners while in prison. It implies the building of buddy systems, and community contact. It means that both prisoner and those on the outside are responsible for changing behavior and therefore being responsible for one's own life. One can fight to live and survive in prison, and one can show great courage in the face of enormous adversity, but one cannot exert control over conditions that they are disempowered both by definition and design to live under. If the challenges posed are fundamental, then the solutions must be as well. ∞

Susan Rosenberg #03684-016 / anti-imperialist political prisoner PMB 7007 Shawnee Unit, Marianna,



Rites



Two poems

Why should life be like a cup of poison that I am forced to drink?
To be enslaved by the american way of life.
My heart yearns for the desert sands, the kindness of a human touch.
Freedom is not to be bound in chains, to be held captive by Democracy.

My captors abuse me with words to wound my heart, chains to bound my hands, and feet. Although my soul and heart belongs to Allah.

I drink in the loneliness and despair around me. I will pay attention that the same fate does not befall me as others.

The INJUSTICE of the prison system has slowly poisoned the mind and hearts of the American society, as well as the inmates imprisoned within the walls of this manmade HELL.

With unmeasured grief I wander through this time.
Time that is a vast space, no end, and no beginning.
Just pain and sorrow, that begins each day and ends the night.

Like a grain of salt, tossed in the sea, no one to care for me.
My presence is not needed or missed.
My heart feels heavy with loneliness and despair.
Each new day brings hope that Allah has heard my prayers for my journey to end, my life to resume on Arab soil.

My burden becomes heavy, my body tired; my tears have I cried in vain?
How long must I endure the pain?
Will I live to see my home? Sadly, this I do not know.
Allah has my destiny, to him I shall trust to end my sorrow.

Debbie Troxell #07700-026
PMB 7007, Shawnee Unit
Marianna, FL. 32446

"Because the women don't stick together."

"Because the women don't stick together." Ask any woman in Dwight Correctional Centre why it is that the rights of male prisoners are more likely to be asserted than are those of female prisoners, and that woman will most likely respond, "because the women don't stick together, and the men do." However, she will not be able to explain *why* the women consistently break rank. I have considered that question, and have concluded that the reason women in prison are more passive and complacent than men in prison does not lie in shallow stereotypes, but is rooted much deeper in the female psyche.

Females are trained from infancy to be submissive, to seek the approval of all men, and to put the comfort and desires of others ahead of their personal needs and ambitions. As a result, many women have poor self esteem and little confidence in their innate value independent of another's opinion. As they pitifully compete for the "good girl's" crown, they are completely innocent of the conviction that they have an inalienable right to be respected. Many battered women will attest that a fundamental reason why women stay in abusive situations is because they believe that domestic violence is the result of their own failure to meet the abuser's fair standards. When those same women are subsequently imprisoned, this pattern of thought remains constant.

Thus, the passivity of imprisoned women in the face of unsanitary han-

dling of food, indifferent medical care, arbitrary punishments, racism, inadequate education, psychiatrists who summarily prescribe psychotropic drugs such as Elevil, Sinequan and Thorazine to any prisoner who simply says "I can't sleep," overcrowding, denial of access to the courts, and the mingling of prisoners on death row with those classified as "minimum security" is but a continuation of the passivity these women exhibited prior to imprisonment in the face of bad housing or homelessness, inferior food at exorbitant prices, inferior education, the lack of health insurance, communities flooded with illegal drugs and guns which no one in the community manufactures, and the statistical certainty of an early, violent death. For this reason, it is imperative that those who fight the latter conditions on the outside must join hands with those who fight the former conditions on the inside. Since the two standards of living are head and tail of the same coin, neither standard will improve until both improve. I urge you to write and/or visit any of the nearly 700 wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, neighbours, in-laws and better-halves in Dwight Correctional Center, and actively support our growing struggle for respect. Almost all of us are under 40 and in our child-bearing years, so the life you save will be the next generation.

Lisa Forbes #N77122
Dwight Correctional Center
P.O. Box 5001
Dwight, IL 60420-5001

MOVE

CONT'D FROM PAGE 7

After the May/13 confrontation when MOVE people – including children – were burnt alive, Rendell refused to arrest any of those officials involved in murdering my family. Instead, he left the matter to be "investigated." I wasn't investigated, I was arrested; MOVE people involved in the Aug/8/78 confrontation weren't "investigated", they were arrested. These are some of the issues Rendell does not want to be called on to explain, especially by MOVE. This is the criminal misfit that want to walk around like he's so clean, honest, respectable; like he's due special consideration or immunity regarding these depositions, but MOVE is serving notice on Rendell that MOVE's issues with him go far beyond the scheduling of a deposition, and that he will answer for all he's done to MOVE, just like all those that have persecuted, wronged us, answer for it.

To quote John Africa the coordinator, "We have forced this system to do things openly that in the past were done behind closed doors, we have forced this system to commit itself to mistakes in such vital areas that from

here on in, anything the MOVE Organization does will be seen as justifiable by people who was awhile back critical of the MOVE Organization's behaviour. MOVE didn't make a mistake by goin' to jail, these judges made a mistake by sendin' us to jail, for the price these judges, cops, d.a.'s is demandin' MOVE pay is going to cost *them*, inconsistencies are always costly, and the MOVE strategy have made it a point to force these judges, cops, d.a.'s into a pile of inconsistencies, big enough to accommodate their own legal burial, for in every MOVE trial there is enough inconsistencies in the court records to bury the judge and that is MOVE's strategy, to bury the system in its own lies. MOVE people don't have to look for a way out of jail, MOVE people's way out of jail was coordinated years before MOVE so-call went to jail, Judge Malmed thought he could hurt MOVE by givin' my 9 brothers and sisters a hundred years in prison, but Judge Malmed didn't hurt MOVE, he imprisoned himself and left MOVE a way out, because as in all of MOVE strategies, Malmed only did what MOVE strategy initiated, which was to force him to do things not written in their so-call laws and commit him to ravin' insensitivity, you see Malmed

wanted to hurt MOVE and all them laws, them rules he claim are so important, the very laws and rules Malmed sent other people to jail for breaking, was broken by Malmed, the cops, the d.a.'s, and every official that is familiar with the MOVE trial, for every one of them have tried to do to MOVE what they claim is against the law to do to anybody, it is against the law to knowingly lock up an innocent person. Malmed knowingly locked up nine innocent people and his raving insensitive behaviour is committed to record leavin' the way for his own ruling to be overturned. The strategy MOVE uses is our innocence, we go to court innocent, tell the truth in court and force the judge to say that we are guilty when the judge knows that we are innocent, forcin' the lie of this system in the open, for MOVE strategy is to crystallize the crime of the court through the criminal behaviour of the judges..."

ONA MOVE,
In MOVE law we trust!
All praises to the order of life!
The power of truth is final!
Long live JOHN AFRICA!
Long live MOVE! ∞

Ramona Johnson Africa # 7564
P.O. Box 180
Muncy, PA 17756

A modest proposal from a prisoner's wife

We can do it! Yes, we women can try to radically change the corrupt prison system, and all the people ensnared into it on any level. We can and should say a firm and unbendable no to any request that we may have thrown at us to bring contraband in on our prison visits. If that no is not heard; if the prisoner doesn't wish to acknowledge that "no!", then we should collectively boycott our visits. Sounds cruel and unfeeling to many, if not most, prisoners, but let's look at the issues. The ceaseless cycle of violence, crime, drugs and prisons has to be addressed very seriously. And if there is to be any chance at all in changing the cycle many prisoners are on, it seems that it is up to us women to make these beginnings, these inroads.

There comes a time when those stories of being an abused kid; or having been "set-up", or "never been given a chance" become not only tedious but also boring. Most prisoners are aware and knowledgeable about "action-reaction", nevertheless they continue gambling not only with their own lives but also with the lives of all the people connected with them. This sounds pretty selfish and unloving! Take the addict for example... if he expended as much energy and conniving into that "other chance" in life as he does towards his habit and all of that which is connected with it, he'd have it made. He'd make it on his own on the street and stay out.

Many women who visit their men inside are put under horrendous pressures to "bring stuff in." Many women bend under these pressures because of their fear of what will happen if they don't

They fear that the man will call in some "slick-chick" from the street to bring it in, which is pretty threatening to the relationship. Also, some women are given the choice of "bring it in, or don't come back!" Now for the women who are relatively naive and who love their men very much, this is very terrifying to hear, let alone dealing with it. They give in. Once having done it, there is no turning back... ever. A precedent has been established. Quite naturally, the women are at risk, but many men choose to ignore this. They lay a whole guilt trip on the women by saying, "you've never done time, so you don't understand. If you really loved me you'd be glad to do it without giving me all these hassles."

So I come back to what I stated at the beginning. If the women said "No!", and if the pressure continued, a boycott seems logically the next step. Hopefully the men could begin to see that the very strengths they count on in the women are being debased, demoralized and weakened by their men with the pressures or the bending to them. Also, in saying "No!", the women could begin to stop the flow of drugs and names of contacts in and out from getting inside. This refusal of the men's requests can aid in the long term survival of their men both inside and after they get out. The men who put their women under such pressures would be forced to make choices in their lives. Do they really want all those changes in life style they so graphically spell out in endless poetry, or is it mostly a game, a sham, a gimmick? The prison system cannot change in any positive way if the people who live in them don't start

making changes within themselves.

The simple facts are that women who under such male dictatorships, given the variety of threats from inside, quickly lose their dignity, self-esteem and identity. They rapidly develop the same type of paranoid and manipulative/conning thought processes as their man. So what ultimately happens? Rage, hate and the loss of trust and respect for the men. Then the relationship is destroyed. Women desperately want to see an end to all this B.S. and assholeism. They want very much to be loyal, supportive and loving. They want a stable life once the men are released. But they can't do it alone. They have to have the men's help, their mutual support, loyalty and love. Deep down, most men want those same things. But it takes work; long struggles and work.

It's true, on the other hand, that there are some women who purposely choose and encourage that whole dangerous and destructive lifestyle. They also enjoy feeding the Penthouse sexual fantasies that are so prevalent in prisons. They feed the addictive habits, encourage the game-playing, and the whole cycle of crime/prisons. These women are pathetic and destructive. The choices are up to the men if they discourage or encourage these women. It's the men who should say "No" to these women.

Few men will outwardly agree with this article. But many will inwardly agree with me. There is little room for self-pity in any significant personal changes. Remember! most prisoners have kids somewhere. These kids are entirely programmed into thinking that the crime/prison culture is the way of life, the way of living. Many kids don't know any other life-style other than abject poverty, hunger, bad nutrition, cops, Children's Aid, street life, prison visits and everything that is associated with them. Don't these kids deserve a far, far better life than this? Don't the mothers deserve much better? I'm asking you. ∞

LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN IN "MODEL" GERMAN PRISONS 'Mules' carry heavy burden

This article was translated and sent to PNS by Paul Wright, and is edited from the translation. It was written by Hilde Kunath, a volunteer counselor in Frankfurt, Germany.

"We have worked for our own executioner." These words were written by Julia, a Columbian incarcerated in the women's prison of Frankfurt-Preungesheim. Currently there are 250 detainees, including Julia, at the Preungesheim women's prison. Forty percent of them are foreigners. In exact number: 24 from Colombia, 11 from Chile, 5 from Argentina, 4 from Brazil and 4 from Bolivia. Aside from these 48 latinamericans there are also other foreigners, the majority of them from Africa and southeast Asia.

Preungesheim is supposed to be a "model" and "humanitarian" prison. Evening classes during the week include yoga, German language, jazz dance and photography, and prisoners are allowed to prepare some of their own meals in a small kitchen on the floor. However, on weekends the cells are locked early at 6:30 pm. The German prisoners are given monthly outings, but for the foreigners, the authorization for this outing resides with the foreign ministry (after one year in prison), who frequently delay the decision.

Julia was sentenced to four and a half years for violating the narcotics law. The women who transport cocaine from Latin America are called "mules", meaning not only useful but also cheap and disposable. Almost without exception they come from the lowest and poorest social classes, and are offered between one and four thousand dollars to transport cocaine, depending on the quantity. This sum represents a fortune they could not earn otherwise. The majority don't know the danger they run, and in many cases they don't even have any idea as to the contents of the package. Julia did know, however, but was sure everything would turn out okay. But something happened with the

false passport she was given, which brought her many problems and a higher sentence. She never met her employers but rather only intermediaries who probably gave only false names. Her employers never again appeared anywhere. They are only interested in the sure transport of their merchandise, but they have nothing to do with the desolate fate of Latinamerican women in German jails.

When confronted with young drug addicts in the prison, Julia is terrified by the destructive dimension of drugs which in her country are given little importance. Coca is openly cultivated in the Andes. The habit of chewing the leaves of this simple and easily cultivated plant has no relation to the drug addiction sweeping the industrialized countries today, but Julia also knows that some youths frequently use cheap drugs to flee the lack of a future in their daily lives. She greatly fears for her children as she has seen that the lack of love and shortage of possibilities to develop their creativity are essential factors that take youths to the fatal dependence on drugs.

While Julia is in prison, her in-laws care for her two children. Contact with them is very sporadic, limited to one phone call a month and a letter once in a while. The worry that weighs most heavily on her is the uncertainty of separation and the insecurity of the fate of her children. In comparison to her german prisonmates, who receive visits from their families and who get furloughs once a month, the foreign prisoners are doubly punished. After completing two thirds of her sentence at the end of January, Julia was deported.

Pilar, also from Colombia, was still in preventive detention when I met her. She has 3 children to support, from different fathers who all eluded their responsibility. When she made the decision to accept the tempting offer of dol-

lars in exchange for a short and safe (as she was assured) trip to Germany, she left her children in care of a neighbour, planning to return in one week.

Everything turned out different: she was given 4 years in prison and denied a reduction in the sentence. Once a month Pilar telephones Soledad, her neighbour, to learn about her children. These conversations profoundly depress her: her 16-year-old son no longer appears at home and it is feared that he has joined a gang. There is also bad news about the 12-year-old boy: he was expelled from school for stealing. When she finally received the news that the 3-year-old had been taken to the hospital with severe asthma attacks, she became ill herself. She was attended by prison medics, who assigned her a psychologist.



only when she has landed in Bogota.

Theresa comes from a village near Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The debts and unemployment of her husband forced her to accept the offer made through a friend. She was assigned a companion. They travelled from Santa Cruz to Brazil, where in a hotel an employee delivered a suitcase to her. She was arrested in Frankfurt, and believes a tip was given to the police. Possibly she was only used to distract them from a bigger shipment. Because of that her preventive detention was especially long: 16 months passed by before she was sentenced.

Theresa is 48 years old and has 6 children who help in sustaining the family. But she is not the oldest in the prison. A 65-year-old Colombian was recently caught and a 15-year-old girl was also enlisted as a mule.

Julia sums it up well. "We latin-american women are the mirror of the social decomposition of our countries. Those who have the money have taken us to economic inequality and they are principally responsible for our current situation. We have worked for our own executioner as we can't find any other exit to help us out of this miserable situation. Would you stay inside a burning house even if you have found a window through which you can save yourself? Is it a crime to try to ensure your family's survival? And if we have no other recourse then we are punished for not understanding how to commit this crime without letting ourselves be caught, as the truly guilty will never be punished, they will never come to prison. When it is said that there is a war on drugs, it is we who pay the price. The statistics on prisoners pretend to serve as an example and act as a justification. The big fish, who are behind it, come and go, they continue without being punished."

Pilar works in the prison laundry, which takes in laundry from other institutions. The median salary is 10 marks a day, between 180 and 200 marks a month. From that is deducted personal costs. A five-minute phone call to her country costs 30 marks. She and the other latin-american women buy things to communally prepare their own foods, as the adaptation to German food causes health problems.

Pilar's day of expulsion also arrives. Under police escort she is taken to the airport. Her things, packed in bags and cardboard boxes, are inspected, mixed up and left in disorder, a degrading situation. Pilar will never be able to return to Germany, and receives her passport

Laura Whitehorn Prison Poems

Written after seeing *Straight, no Chaser*; a documentary biography of Thelonious Monk, 2/17/91.

The auditorium lights dim
and once again, Thelonious,
I watch your pain.
(Reverberating round notes,
the piano sings.)
I watch your shoulders.
That's where it tells
if you're not completely sure
your ears are hearing things right.
Tensed
hunched
holding back
while silently pouring forth.
And suddenly, sitting here in prison
at 45
I'm back at the Gate and the Vanguard
at 17,
Learning a little,
by watching you,
to respect a pain
so great and so brilliant
no 17-year-old white kid
could comprehend it.
But I could learn, from you, to respect.
Such an important lesson.
Such beautiful jazz music. Thelonious.

Death Penalty: Wilbur Lee Evans,
executed by the State of Virginia,
10/17/90

Day settles, grey, leaden,
Heavy with the certainty
of another death, another absence.
One more, one more,
another Black man killed.
Murder and hatred
cloaked in such polite attire,
such legality,
no justice
but acres of legal procedure,
The mask of genocide.
Do statistics tell us anything?
Black kills white, and dies;
White kills Black, and lives.
So it continues
stupid and cruel,
Blotting out the life of one Mr. Wilbur
Lee Evans,
and murdering
another piece
of the humanity of us all.

Writing poetry
in prison
is easy,
Because every minute is full of heartache
And everyone knows
heartache
is good
for poetry.

Women torn from their children
Women dying of cancer, dying of AIDS

For G, 3-24-91, Lexington

My tears flow, rusty
with a pain as old as flint,
anger old as fire.
Don't try to tell me
that slavery is past.
This sister died
torn from her own children,
locked away from her family,
hidden from her friends,
outcast among outcasts.
In chains she died.
Yes, she too. Another
chained death.
Another chained AIDS death.
Shackled to pain.
Shackled to loneliness,
For the terrible crime
of ruining her own life
with drugs.
With her life she touched mine.
With her death she leaves all of us
to stop these crimes
and heal these wounds
Until our tears no longer need serve
as ammunition.

without their families, without
their friends
Women whose lives have been destroyed
by rich white men
who have never known
a minute of heartache.

Every minute is full of heartache
And everyone knows
that heartache
is good for poetry.

To Susan, Alejandrina, Silvia
FCI Lexington, 3-15-91

Today I sneaked out of bounds
to steal a glimpse of the rec yard
where the police had planned for you to
rec for one hour a day
for 58 years
for 35 years
for 43 years
There were birds singing in lush
Kentucky bluegreen evergreens
outside the fence,
But you couldn't have seen them
from your prison within a prison.
Maybe
if you'd stood absolutely still
for exercise,
not moving feet that would scrape on
the concrete,
you might have caught a note or two of
sweet birdsong.

Let me tell it: the rec yard was a desolate
kennel run -
cages inside a wall
wall inside a fence
fence inside another razorwire fence.

From your kennel
if you'd stood absolutely still
for exercise
maybe you could have heard a fragment
of birdsong.
From inside your cage
the world could still hear
every beat of your beating heart.

HOW MUCH K A A

QUESTIONS

1. You can tell by looking at a person whether or not they are infected with the AIDS virus.

True ___ False ___

2. If you are HIV+, this means you have AIDS. True ___ False ___

3. If you take the HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus) antibody test and the results are that you are "HIV-positive (HIV+)", this means that you can pass on the virus to someone else. True ___ False ___

4. Any person infected with HIV can pass it on to someone else through sharing needles and works. True ___ False ___

5. You can get HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) by touching or hugging someone infected with HIV. True ___ False ___

6. You can get HIV from being coughed or sneezed on by someone infected with HIV. True ___ False ___

7. You can catch AIDS from a mosquito bite. True ___ False ___

8. If you share a room, toilet or shower with someone infected with the AIDS virus, you will probably catch it from her. True ___ False ___

9. You can catch the AIDS virus by sharing a cigarette or a glass with someone who is HIV-positive. True ___ False ___

10. Blood, semen and vaginal fluids spread HIV. True ___ False ___

11. Tears, saliva (spit) and urine spread HIV. True ___ False ___

12. Water alone is a good way to clean works after shooting dope. True ___ False ___

13. Using a rubber (condom) when having sex helps reduce the spread of HIV. True ___ False ___

14. Two people who are having sex with each other, who are both infected with the AIDS virus, do not need to use rubbers. True ___ False ___

15. Using a diaphragm is as good as using a rubber to prevent the spread of HIV. True ___ False ___

16. When two women have sex with each other, there is no risk of infecting each other with HIV. True ___ False ___

17. It is important to tell someone about being HIV-positive before having sex or sharing needles with them. True ___ False ___

18. A pregnant woman infected with HIV can give it to her unborn baby. True ___ False ___

19. A person can be infected with HIV and still not have AIDS. True ___ False ___

BREAK THROUGH THE WALL

WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS stands for:

- A Acquired
- I Immune
- D Deficiency
- S Syndrome

Not born with
Body's defense against disease
Not working properly
Group of signs or symptoms

AIDS is caused by the HIV virus, which breaks down the body's immune system. HIV stands for Human Immune-deficiency Virus. A person who is "HIV+" (HIV-positive) is infected with this virus and can pass it on to other people through exchanging blood, semen (cum), or vaginal fluids.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET AIDS?

AIDS is spread through a direct exchange of blood, semen (cum), or vaginal fluids between an HIV-infected person and someone else.

The three main ways AIDS/HIV is spread are:

- Having unsafe sex with an infected person
- Sharing needles: IV drug needles, syringes, and possibly cookers. Also tattooing and ear-piercing needles.
- Babies can be born with the HIV virus if their mother is infected.

AIDS IS NOT SPREAD THROUGH CASUAL CONTACT. YOU CANNOT GET AIDS THROUGH:

- Sharing a cigarette or a soda
- Using the same shower or toilet
- Living in the same room
- Sharing food or eating utensils
- Someone coughing
- Sharing the same telephone
- Mosquito or insect bites
- Kissing, touching, or hugging someone who has AIDS

YOU CAN STAY HEALTHY EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS. YOU CAN STRENGTHEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM AND LIVE LONGER IF YOU:

- Exercise
- Keep a positive attitude
- Quit smoking
- Eat the right foods
- Quit drinking or using drugs

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AIDS VIRUS, PREVENTING IT, AND TREATING IT, COME TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS IN THE UNITS:

Unit A/B: _____

Unit C/D: _____

Unit E/F: _____

Special discussion in Spanish: _____

These open discussions and this poster are sponsored by Pleasanton AIDS Counseling and Education (PLACE), an inmate club committed to AIDS education and to providing support for women whose lives are touched by AIDS/HIV.

Graphics Credits: Kris Green, People of Color Against AIDS Network, Alison Bechdel.

Poster design & production: Chocolate, Kris, Falfi, Linda, Haydee, Carolyn, Linda, ACE/Bedford Hills

Poster and questionnaire were sent to PNS by Linda Evans, anti-imperialist political prisoner incarcerated at Pleasanton. The material was developed by Pleasanton AIDS Counselling and Education (PLACE).

DO YOU NOW BOUT AIDS?

ANSWERS

- 1. False.** Many people are infected with the AIDS virus (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus or HIV) but are still in good health. They show no symptoms of any of the diseases HIV-positive people catch when their immune systems get weaker.
- 2. False.** Being HIV+ (HIV-positive) means that your blood has been tested and it shows that you have been infected with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). AIDS is actually an advanced stage of this infection, where your body's immune system is so weak that it cannot fight off disease.
- 3. True.** Anyone infected with HIV can pass the virus on to others, even if they seem healthy.
- 4. True.** Sharing needles, works, cooker or cotton while shooting IV drugs is a common way of passing the AIDS virus. Traces of blood get trapped in the needle or syringe and can be passed from one person to another when any of these are shared. The AIDS virus lives in blood. It is also possible for HIV to be spread through tattooing and ear piercing needles.
- 5. False.** You can't catch the AIDS from touching, hugging, kissing or sitting next to a person who has AIDS.
- 6. False.** The AIDS virus only lives in certain body fluids (blood, semen (cum) and vaginal fluids. HIV is not passed on by sneezes or coughs.
- 7. False.** Mosquitos can't pass on AIDS because HIV is a disease of human beings. Even if a mosquito were interrupted while biting an HIV+ person and went on to bite someone else, the amount of blood exchanged would be so little that it wouldn't be enough to transmit HIV.
- 8. False.** The AIDS virus is only passed on through a direct exchange of certain body fluids (see questions 10 and 11), not through casual contact. There are no cases of anyone catching HIV simply because they live with someone who has AIDS or is HIV+. The AIDS virus cannot live outside the human body, and doesn't live on any objects like toilet seats, dishes, glasses or counter-tops.
- 9. False.** The AIDS virus only lives inside the human body. It is very fragile and dies in the air. So smoking with or drinking after someone who is HIV+ is not a way that you can catch the AIDS virus. But don't share toothbrushes because most people's gums bleed when they brush their teeth. Also don't share razors in case you get a cut.

10. True. Blood, semen (cum) and vaginal fluids are the body fluids where the AIDS virus lives and reproduces. HIV is very concentrated in these fluids, so it doesn't take a lot of them to pass on the virus to someone else.

11. False. These body fluids have been shown to have little or none of the AIDS virus in them, so tears, spit or urine cannot transmit the virus.

12. False. Water alone does not kill the AIDS virus in works or anywhere else. Before using any works, always rinse them out with bleach. The AIDS virus can be killed through rinsing works out at least twice with diluted household bleach, then rinsing them out again with clean water until all the bleach is rinsed away.

13. True. Using condoms when having sex is one of the best ways to reduce the risk of spreading HIV only if the condom is used correctly, and if it doesn't break. The condoms should be latex, not sheepskin. The condom must catch all the semen (cum) in order for it to protect you from HIV. Using a jelly foam, cream or condom that contains "non-oxynol-9" also helps kill the AIDS virus.

14. False. People who are HIV+ often think they can have unsafe sex with someone else who is HIV+. Exchanging infected body fluids (blood, semen and vaginal fluids) increases the concentration of the AIDS virus inside your body, which threatens your immune system, which usually protects a person from catching diseases. The more of this virus that is inside your body, the weaker your immune system will become.

15. False. A diaphragm, or any other form of birth control, will do nothing to stop the spread of the AIDS virus, because a diaphragm doesn't prevent semen from entering your body.

16. False. Sex between women is generally low-risk for transmitting HIV; there have been very few documented cases where HIV infection can be traced only to lesbian sex. However, there is some risk of HIV transmission during sex between women because there is the possibility of a direct exchange of blood or vaginal fluids through cuts, or menstrual blood.

17. True. Informing your sexual partner or the people you share works with that you are HIV-positive allows them to make a decision to protect themselves by practicing safe sex or by cleaning works with bleach.

18. True. The AIDS virus can be carried from the mother to her unborn baby until it is born. About 30% of the babies born to HIV+ mothers are HIV+ themselves.

19. True. Many people who are infected with HIV have no symptoms of AIDS. AIDS is not simply one disease, but a complicated immune system disorder that means a person who has AIDS can't fight off diseases that other people normally don't catch. People do not develop full-blown AIDS as soon as an AIDS antibody test shows that they are HIV-positive. Someone can be HIV+ for several years and be healthy. AIDS itself develops over time, as a person's immune system gets weaker.

YOU CANNOT GET AIDS FROM:

YOU CAN GET AIDS FROM:

SIGN UP FOR THE CLASS ON WOMEN AND AIDS

Update on Dhoruba Bin Wahad — former Black Panther leader loses appeal and is threatened by prison once again

On Thursday, Dec/19/91, the New York Court of Appeals re-instated Dhoruba Bin Wahad's conviction and paved the way for his possible re-incarceration. Dhoruba is a former member of the Black Panther Party who was framed by the FBI and New York City Police Department (NYPD). Now almost two years since his release on Mar/22/90, Dhoruba faces the possibility of re-imprisonment. After robbing Dhoruba of nineteen years of his life the Manhattan District Attorney (D.A.) may deny him his remaining years of freedom and silence him once again.

Dhoruba's conviction was overturned on Mar/15/90. At a bail hearing on Mar/22/90 — packed to overflowing capacity by his supporters — Dhoruba was released on his own recognizance. At the time of his release, Dhoruba was one of the longest held political prisoners in the world. Dhoruba won his freedom after waging, along with his attorneys, an exhausting, decade-long legal battle to obtain over 300,000 pages of FBI and NYPD documents. These documents prove conclusively that Dhoruba had been targeted and later framed because of his membership in the Black Panther Party. They include 19 inconsistent and exculpatory statements made by the key witness against Dhoruba.

The D.A., in cahoots with the NYPD, withheld this critical evidence at all three of the trials that it took to convict Dhoruba. The D.A. knew that the credibility of their key witness would be significantly damaged if it became known that she had repeatedly changed her story. Obviously, this fact, if known, would have probably resulted in Dhoruba's acquittal. However, because Dhoruba's first trial had ended in a mistrial, and the second in a hung jury, the Manhattan D.A.'s office was desperate and used whatever (legal and illegal) methods — including withholding crucial evidence — to ensure that the third trial would result in a life sentence for Dhoruba.

Although Dhoruba knew all along he was being framed, it was only later that he learned that his frame-up was a combined effort of city, state and federal "law enforcement" agencies. At the time of Dhoruba's conviction, he did not have concrete evidence to prove that he had been framed. It was only after he had exhausted his direct appeals that he and his attorneys obtained material proof of his frame-up. If this evidence had come to light during his direct appeals he would have been automatically granted a new trial, under current New York State law. The Court cooperated in Dhoruba's frame-up because it did not force the prosecution to turn over the withheld evidence sooner when Dhoruba would have been guaranteed a new trial.

Once convicted, Dhoruba had virtually no legal remedies available to him. It was sheer diligence that led Dhoruba and his attorneys to seek relief by filing a 440.10 motion, an obscure post-conviction remedy. Dhoruba was eventually freed when a New York State Supreme Court judge ruled that if the prosecution withholds evidence a defendant is entitled to a new trial whether or not all direct appeals have been exhausted.

On Mar/15/90, the New York State Supreme Court ruled that it isn't important when a defendant discovers that the prosecution withheld evidence, what is important is that the prosecution acted "improperly" by withholding evidence. But on Dec/19/91 in a break with longstanding legal precedence, the Court of Appeals (the highest Court in New York State) sanctioned the withholding of evidence by the prosecution. The Court ruled that once a defendant's direct appeals are exhausted, the defendant must "demonstrate a reasonable possibility that the failure to disclose the [withheld] material contributed to the verdict."

In Dhoruba's case, we have a man who was forced to spend 19 years in prison for

something he did not do because the Manhattan D.A. withheld evidence that if released sooner would have guaranteed him a new trial. And then on Dec/19/91, the Court of Appeals rewards the prosecution and further penalizes Dhoruba by stating that he must now prove that the withheld evidence would have changed the jury's verdict. The Manhattan D.A. has yet to be made accountable for their illegal conduct. Instead, Dhoruba's conviction is re-instated and he faces the possibility of going back to jail without ever having his day in court. The Manhattan D.A. may move to have him put back in prison immediately before a hearing can be held to determine whether or not the withheld evidence would have resulted in his acquittal at his third trial.

The Dec/19/91 decision of the Court of Appeals has broad political and civil implications for the poor and falsely accused. Dhoruba was fortunate enough to have attorneys who were willing (because of their personal and political commitment) to pursue his case during the direct appeals process and afterwards. They carried through despite the fact that Dhoruba was unable to pay them. Most poor people are not so fortunate.

The Court of Appeals' decision essentially encourages the prosecution to withhold evidence until a defendant's direct appeals are exhausted. It sanctions misconduct and political repression. It rewards law enforcement agencies for failing to abide by the very laws they are sworn to uphold. It sends a clear message to "law enforcement" agencies that they can use whatever methods they want to send some one to prison whether they are guilty or not.

For more information on this critical case, contact:

Campaign to Free Black Political Prisoners and POWs in the U.S.
PO Box 339 Kingsbridge Station
Bronx, NY 10463-0339
(718) 624-0800

Dhoruba Remains Free

On Feb/12/92, Dhoruba Bin Wahad went to court, facing a bench warrant for a failure to appear at a court hearing on Feb/5th which could have resulted in a his re-imprisonment due to the December N.Y. decision Supreme Court. Dhoruba had refused to attend the Feb/5th hearing since his lawyers could not attend and the judge refused to cancel the hearing. On the 12th, the judge decided to let Dhoruba remain free on bail until another hearing in April. ∞

Prisoners used as scapegoats to balance the state budget

In a move that is sure to cause pandemonium among prisoners throughout New York's prison system, prison officials had announced that, effective Jan/1/92, a series of budget cuts throughout the state prison system would go into effect. The cuts, imposed solely on prisoners, are supposedly designed to help the state budget.

The cuts, proposed by Governor Mario Cuomo, are drastic and have the serious potential of setting off major disturbances and other unrest throughout the state's more than 60 prisons. Under these cuts, prisoners will be required to pay \$25. before participating in the G.E.D. program (equivalent to a high school diploma, *ed.*), be subject to a \$5. fine for disciplinary reports, have their prison wages reduced by 25%, pay room and board fees if employed and participating in a work release program, and will no longer receive a 10% discount on items purchased through the prison commissary. In addition, the state will be exploring ways to repeal legislation that requires prison officials to pay \$40. gate money to each prisoner upon release. It is very likely that this small benefit will be axed as well.

The majority of prisoners who are poor (and that means practically all of us), have no outside source of income and must depend solely on meager prison wages to survive and maintain some semblance of decency in prison. These cuts are sure to make life in prison for us more of a living hell. Most prisoners are paid less than 95 cents a day for their labor. And this money is often used to purchase soap, toothpaste, writing materials, and other necessities which prison officials have already begun to cut back on. Within the past three years or so, prison officials have cut

back on education programs, visitation and medical care. The next thing we will be told is that we will have to pay a fee to help offset the cost of food and so-called medical care provided for us.

These cuts would not be necessary if Governor Cuomo, instead of concentrating the state's resources on building more and more prisons, would seriously explore alternative incarceration measures. In 1973, New York had 12,500 people in its state prison system. Under Cuomo, the state's prison population has nearly quadrupled in size since 1973. In 1990 alone New York spent roughly 3 billion dollars to cover the state's prison systems construction and operating costs. It was recently revealed in a report by

the Correctional Association of New York that for the 1992-93 fiscal year the state plans to build 8 more prisons, at a cost of approximately 70 million dollars each. This massive expansion in prison construction has not produced any decrease in New York's crime rate, but instead has been a foolish waste of taxpayers money and a major cause of New York's troubled economy, which prisoners are now being shafted for!

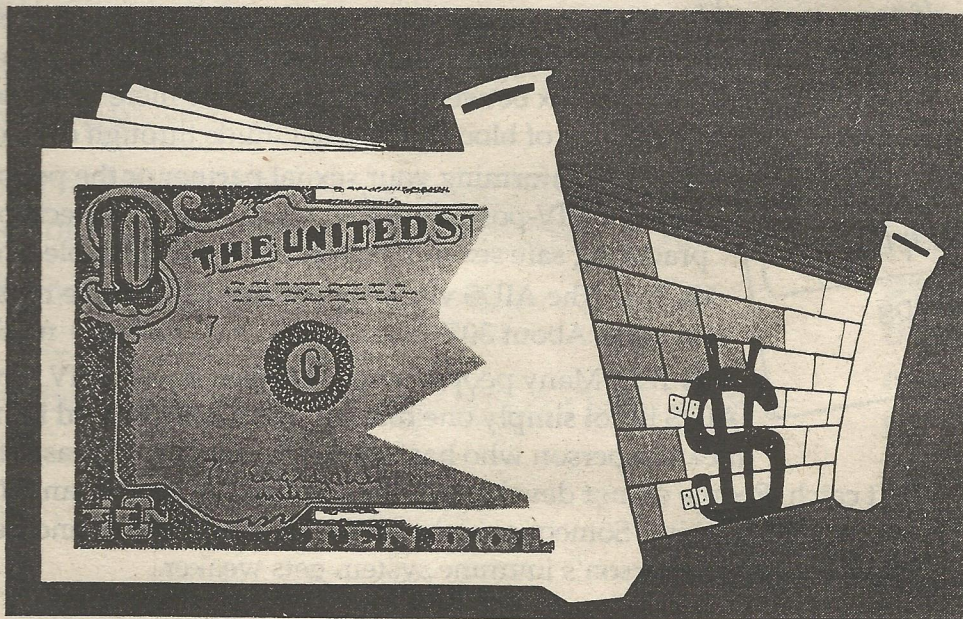
According to the New York Coalition for Criminal Justice, non-violent drug and property offenders constitute nearly half of the state's prison population. The cost for keeping just one person in prison for a year is over \$25,000. Millions would be saved if these individuals, who pose no serious threat to society, were released instead of being forced to languish in prison and slave for a system that benefits more financially from keeping people in prison than out of prison. Rather than pursue this avenue to address New York's troubled economy, Governor Cuomo

has taken the easy way out by punishing and "scapegoating" prisoners in his battle to revive New York's economy.

Where will the average prisoners obtain \$25. to pay for an education and/or a \$5. disciplinary fine? The state already extorts millions of dollars from prisoners paid in surcharge fees following their conviction of criminal offenses. Will prison employees who are often guilty of violating rules/regulations and prisoners' rights be required to pay a fine too? Many prisoners will be discouraged from pursuing an education because of this new \$25. fee policy to participate in the G.E.D. program, thus increasing the likelihood of their returning to criminal activity once released from prison. Stealing, extortion and other mayhem among prisoners is sure to increase as prisoners struggle to survive these cuts. Guards who have a reputation for harassing and fabricating false disciplinary reports against prisoners are sure to step up their harassment now that they know they can humiliate prisoners even further by subjecting us to a \$5. penalty! It was only a few months ago that a federal judge ruled that Black and Hispanic prisoners at Elmira Correctional facility are disciplined more frequently than white prisoners and are often the victim of false disciplinary reports filed against them by racist and vindictive guards.

According to state prison Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin, the department will pursue good time legislation off the minimum sentence (something for which prisoners have been fighting for years) to "cushion the effect of this loss of benefits to the inmate population." But the department has no record of supporting good time legislation in the past, and did not support the good time bill (proposed by Assemblyman Arthur Eve) that was defeated in the assembly last year. This promise to pursue good time legislation is simply intended to pacify prisoners and make us think that in the long run we will be getting

continued on next page



Collective letter from Indiana prisoners to the administration regarding their critical situation

To: Mr. Aiken, D.O.C. Commissioner

From: The Prisoners Confined to the Disciplinary Segregation Unit, Indiana State Reformatory

Re: Staff misconduct., D/S Unit/I.R.

January, 1992

Mr. Aiken,

We write to bring to your attention the very dangerous situation which is being created by the Custody Staff working on the D/S Unit here at the Pendleton Reformatory. Currently there exists a minimum of racial tensions among us. Black and white, both are confined to the D/S Unit. Presently we are all active in attempting to foster an awareness among ourselves as to the socio-political and economic dimensions of our imprisonment, while, at the same, sincerely encouraging each other, as men and fellow human beings, to struggle against the negative habits, vice and criminal mentality which was responsible, to a large degree, for our past, parasite-like behavior against our peoples and communities.

Previously this process of enlightenment and awakening has been somewhat limited to the African-American prisoners, and has (historically) been met with maximum repression by the clique of Masons and white supremacists (i.e. Klansmen) who run the custody aspects of the Reformatory. Beatings, brutality and the manipulation of white prisoners to injure politically aware, activist African-American prisoners was commonplace. In fact, such brutal repression, specifically the torture and beating of several prisoners on lock-up by racist correctional officers, sparked the Feb/11/85 riot/hostage situation.

Since then much has changed, but the Klan and racist Masonic orders are still using this prison as a recruiting area and an arena in which to propagate their bigotry and as before, the lock-up unit remains their primary area of activity! Currently, as we are sure you may be aware, the Custody Staff assigned to the D/S Unit here are under internal investigation for acts of racial misconduct, unnecessary use of riot gas and fire hoses (250 to 300 lbs of water pressure) on unarmed men trapped within 6'x 8' steel boxes, the use of riot sticks (i.e. baseball bats) and "stun-guns" upon men who are already "subdued" and handcuffed, not to mention the actual torture and beating of handcuffed prisoners. Since the peaceful protests here (Nov/91), in resistance to the

unlawful transfer of many of us from D/S to the M.C.C. "Supermax" Unit, and in solidarity with the men hunger-striking at "Supermax" and due to the oppressive and continuing lock-down of the whole Reformatory, the aggressiveness and racially motivated incidents by D/S staff against us has risen noticeably.

One prisoner was poked in the eye by a broom requiring medical treatment. One man was blasted around his cage for several minutes with 300 lbs of water pressure (he was unarmed). One man, again unarmed, was shot with wooden blocks from a stun-gun. Another was chained and shackled and then beaten brutally with bats and nightsticks until unconscious, requiring multiple stitches in his face and forehead. And the list goes on!!! The use of racial slurs such as "nigger" "spic", and "nigger-lover" by D/S staff have also become commonplace — and there have been many instances of staff using this type of language to provoke prisoners into throwing objects at them to justify stripping our cages bare, and/or to write us conduct reports to increase the time we must stay on lock-up (and consequently in prison). And there have been a good number of instances of staff writing "conduct reports" alleging we have "battered them" (e. threw something) merely for challenging and verbally checking their racist actions and comments of D/S staff.

Traditionally the Klan and racist Masonic clique operating behind these walls have found the ignorant, racist white prisoner their tool of revenge and repression against those (white and Black) who question the legitimacy of white supremacy in Amerika, and encourage socio-political awareness outside of "acceptable" Euro-Christian concepts. Presently no such "tool" exists on the D/S Unit — much to the extreme discomfort of the racist staff.

In spite of the utter nonsense and outright lies offered to the people of Indiana by the D.O.C. through the media, we well know that no justification exists to continue holding 1600-plus prisoners on lock-down for peaceful protests against staff misconduct towards us on lock-up! The lies and misinformation are pathetically thin to the family and friends of us all, who daily receive letters that make our inhumane living conditions and the op-

pressive lock-down situation crystal clear. To this date we continue to deny you and your subordinates the pretext to "legitimize" our oppression!

As the protests clearly show, the activities and tensions on lock-up affect the general prison population, as well. It should be noted that the protest of Nov/91 by the general prison population was "multi-racial." And it is these two points which relate directly to the situation we are calling your attention to the



lack of racial tensions on D/S signals to the racist staff an end to their ability to enforce their white supremacist designs (by proxy) among us. The Custody Staff have been sowing rumors to create racial tensions to try to check and disrupt the solidarity and unity we have established on D/S. This will lead to racial violence. Towards this end various means are being employed, particularly sow-

ing rumors. When a white prisoner leaves the Unit, he is told by his guard "escort": "We've got the word that the niggers are going to riot and kill all of the whites once the lock-down ends." Rumors are planted among the African-Americans by subtly hinting to certain whites: "We've heard you're going to move on the Blacks..." — knowing that this will be conveyed to everyone, etc. etc.

Presently the situation has turned even more serious with the direct involvement of the D/S Custody Supervisor, Lt. Greer, in these activities. It is our firm belief that D/S staff are trying to provoke a racial incident through which racial tensions (the prison-over) can be heightened to disrupt the spirit which resulted in the November protests. Such an incident, aside from heightening the racial tensions, would also provide a convenient excuse for the racist Masonic/Klan clique working within this prison and concentrated on D/S, to literally slaughter many of us who are not "with" the dark program of white supremacy. This is no exaggeration and quite to the contrary — the only thing which has prevented it thus far is the fact that in our quest for respect, our human rights and dignity has been channeled into peaceful means of protest and resistance, depriving the racist clique any overt pretext to attack and kill us.

The situation on D/S is becoming dangerous and staff as well as every one of us on D/S are under life-threatening tensions. We ask that you **immediately** remove the Custody staff working D/S, most notably Lt. Greer, C.O. Porter, C.O. Downing, C.O. Penticuff and C.O. White — to name a few of the most obvious instigators, klansmen and racist Masons, as well as the D/S Counselor S. Roberts. We ask that a full-scale investigation into the activities of each D/S custody staff person be made to determine the extent of their racist activities, acts of brutality and "race-baiting". Again, we stress that you take **immediate** action (i.e. not add to our repression with reprisal behind this letter but that you seriously check your racist KKK/Masonic subordinates.) We close by stressing that you have been forewarned of the dangerous and explosive tensions being created by the racists working D/S — the matter is now clearly in your hands.

Signed by 31 prisoners of D/S Unit

Editor's Note: The prisoners have already suffered retaliation for writing the above letter. C.S. Riot Gas has been shot in on them and about 10 men were put in "bare cages", and two were sent to the "Supermax" unit. ∞

Hungerstrike in Control Unit in Indiana Mainline prisoners locked-down for their support

We are on lockdown here at the Indiana Reformatory. Several months ago the state opened a new "supermax" control unit at Westville, IN. Shortly thereafter it began to be filled with prisoners from various disciplinary segregation units, particularly "politically aware" prisoners, from throughout the state's prison system. On Aug/23, many of these men began a hungerstrike to demand the closing of this unit and/or an investigation into the inhumane conditions they are being subjected to. In late October, the state received a court order to force-feed (via I.V.) those men who were continuing the hungerstrike (to date they continue to struggle — resisting the I.V. treatment). All the while the state refused to allow the various human and civil rights, church and prison reform groups (who are trying to help) access to the control unit to investigate the conditions and brutality.

About the same time as the state received the I.V. court order, in late October, they began transferring men from the Disciplinary Segregation unit here to the M.C.C. control unit. No fore warning, no due process or opportunity to contact loved ones — just the blue bus at 4:00 A.M.!

Due to the treatment of those at M.C.C., as well as the way we were being moved from Disciplinary Seg. here to M.C.C., the men in the mainline prison population staged several peaceful protests. As a result the entire prison population was placed on "lockdown" status.



That was Nov/6th! We remain on lockdown to this date. Temporarily the state stopped transferring men to the M.C.C. unit — but now this practice is starting up once again! And there is no end in sight to the lockdown. The struggle goes on!

If you would like to assist by writing letters of protest concerning the Pendleton lockdown, the transfers from Pendleton to the M.C.C. Unit and the barbaric treatment of those men at the M.C.C. Unit, they should be directed to:

Mr J. Aikins Commissioner
Indiana Dep't of Corrections
804 State Office Bldg.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

Mr. J. Duckworth, Superintendent
Indiana State Reformatory
POB 28 Pendleton, IN 46064

Our thanks to you who care to write!
In struggle!
Towards a better tomorrow!

Abd al-Bari
POB 30 #31561
Indiana Reformatory
Pendleton, IN 46064 ∞

N.Y. budget *continued from page 12*

something to "make up" for the drastic cuts we must endure. In reality we will not be getting anything!

The central question to be asked is: what will prisoners do in response to these repressive cuts and what seems like a serious attempt to reduce us to modern day slaves? First and foremost, prisoners must organize and protest these cuts. Our families, who also will be affected by these cuts, should be encouraged to support us in our struggle. Unfortunately, too many prisoners are **drunk** from watching and listening to too much T.V. and music to pay any serious attention to what this system is doing to us.

Too many of us are just full of "talk" and afraid to struggle, preferring instead to let others struggle alone and make the hard sacrifices. But we are cowards if we do not stand up to a system that is trying to make slaves of us.

1991 marked the 20th commemoration of the 1971 Attica massacre. Many gains were won for prisoners as a result of this rebellion., which involved many prisoners sacrificing their lives for better prison conditions and the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Prisoners today should want no less. In the words of Frederick Douglass: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." We must **struggle** for our right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Charles Montgomery
(Kenya Nkrumah) 75-B-1534
Box 500
Elmira, NY 14902 ∞

New Jersey's Marion

...It's called Administrative Close Supervision Unit (ACSU), and is located on the grounds of Rahway State Prison, near the city of Newark, NJ...

When I began this article, and wrote the above words, I was a captive held at Trenton (NJ) State Prison, but before I could even complete it, I was "kidnapped" (*Nov/7/91), along with two other brothers, (William "Kareem" Stovall and Sundiata Lumumba), and whisked off to the highly repressive ACSU under "high security" status.

But, be that as it may, my primary reason for composing this particular article is not related to or motivated by my personal dilemma, but, more so the plight of the brothers held captive here in general. Initially, my intention was to construct this writing based on "hearsay" data compiled from reliable sources here, but that's no longer necessary, for, as I said, I'm now here myself where the goings-on can be witnessed from a first-hand vantage point.

Without doubt, we all know about U.S. Penitentiary at Marion, IL, but ACSU is Jersey's "best kept secret", thus exposure on a national level is in order. Built, and "opened for business" in 1988, ACSU consists of four high-tech control units, each containing 81 cells; the population totaling 324 prisoners is at full capacity. Its security level classifications are as diverse as the prisoners' offenses, sentences, Administrative Segregation sanctions and their ages. What doesn't vary at all though, is the national origin of the captives that make up this joint. The prisoners are predominantly of Afrikan descent, with our captors comprising just the opposite—racist, white supremacists who generally gravitate towards prison settings, which provide forums for them to vent the racist rage they harbor for people of color on a daily basis.

Many have invoked the term "repressive" in their attempt to describe this place, but I don't think the term accurately depicts the wretched conditions here—it's an understatement. To try and record all the physical confrontations here between prisoners and agents of oppression would be asking for too much space. Therefore, I'll limit my descriptions to the fascist procedures.

First of all, this camp's entire program is centered around petty harassment in its rawest form. Though ACSU is all around repressive towards all of its captives, there's a special form of repression reserved for and meted out to those the administration perceives to be political—and for some strange reason, the state of New Jersey all of a sudden feels as though every political prisoner and prisoner of war in Jersey is a member of the Afrikan National Ujamaa (ANU), though the organization is relatively "new"—and the liberation struggle has been in existence much before the ANU came on the scene.

To begin with, all prisoners at ACSU who are labelled political have a sign on their door with the words **Suited Escort** on it meaning any time you leave your cell for a moment, you have to be escorted by forces clad in full riot gear. Prisoners who are on suited escort status are allowed yard once a week, for 3 hours. The yards consist of 4 "kennels" which are each no bigger than a few of the cells here. Because of our so-called special handling status only 8 of us are allowed to be on the yard at any given time, usually 2 in each cage. Prisoners under regular or "ordinary" status are allowed to gather in the yard in groups of up to 40, with 10 in each cage. They get yard twice a week. The administration offered us night time indoor recreation to be held inside of another cage on the unit, but this not-so-noble gesture has been universally boycotted from its inception.

Suited-escort prisoners can attend the law library 1 at a time, at a rate of approximately once every 2 months, while others are allowed to go in large groups, and on a more frequent basis. No one on suited-escort has been allowed to enroll in school. Phone calls: 1 a day for a 10 minute duration. Visiting:

make sure your visitors aren't wanted for anything, because while they're on visit, police background checks will be conducted on them, and if they happen to be wanted, state pigs will be there waiting on them at the conclusion of the visit. Prisoners are forbidden from communicating on the unit, or sharing/passing literature or anything to one another. Whenever a prisoner exits his cell for whatever reason, he must hand all of his clothes out thru the porthole, and when his door is opened, come out butt naked and get dressed. At no time do suited-escort prisoners come in any direct contact with their captors, unless they are first handcuffed behind their back, which is performed by the prisoner turning around and sticking his hands backwards thru a slot that was cut in the fence so the agents of the opposite side of the fence could cuff him. Then the prisoner walks to the gate to be escorted. If a prisoner commits a "minor" infraction like talking or blocking their air vent, then the pig comes with what's commonly referred to as an "on-the-spot", and seize either your radio, t.v. or yard for 5 days. The temperature in the cells is often times consistent with the temperature outside, and, contributing to this, you have the air vents constantly blowing cold air, that the administration foolishly tries to convince you is heat! All cells are totally white in color, and a destabilization program is in effect, where periodically prisoners are shuffled from unit to unit, with the agents' ultimate scheme and psychology being to keep us unbalanced, disoriented, and thus, unorganized. Cell searches are performed here on a daily basis also.

Racist pigs here were recently barred from wearing headbands which display Nazi symbols. According to the Assistant Superintendent, who's Hispanic: "he can't control what's in a man's mind," which is true, but to not condemn such racist action is, in essence, condoning it. Pigs here sport combat boots with their pant legs tucked in them, portraying themselves in the rightful light, as soldiers in an army. Mail is "heavily censored"

— often times never even reaching its intended destination, and basically all forms of material relating reality from an Afrikan/black perspective are outlawed, under the guise of being "subversive". The fact of the matter though is that it's a crime to be Afrikan in ACSU just as it has always been a crime to be Afrikan anywhere else in Amerika.

But, in spite of all, political consciousness in the state of New Jersey appears to be at an all-time high, with the machines of repression and persecution meeting it every step of the way. In fact, I was given 90 days Ad. Seg./15 days in the hole, for having a Black Liberation Army (BLA) poster with a black panther (cat) on it. Mao said: to be attacked by the enemy is the ultimate compliment—well, I guess there's a whole lot of "complimenting" going on here.

Upcoming are 2 important political trials of combatants held here at ACSU: One is the trial of the Black August Resistance Movement: seven brothers accused of stabbing several pigs at Trenton State Prison, allegedly in solidarity with the anniversaries of our beloved BLA comrades—George and Jonathan Jackson, and in response to rampant abuse there. The other is the trial of William (Kareem) Stovall and his brother Dinard Pinkney, who were both lured into a clever,

but wicked scheme to entrap them—a scheme that was orchestrated by the federal government, the state police of New Jersey, the administration of Trenton State Prison, and the notorious internal affairs unit (Trenton)—all in conjunction with one another. The set-up involved the purchasing of weapons and explosives from agents.

These trials are scheduled to begin during the early part of 1992, and the brothers are in dire need of community and political support; therefore we ask that individuals as well as political organizations in the area attend their trials, pack the courtrooms, and lend these brothers all the support they rightfully deserve. Disorder brings order...

Build the army!

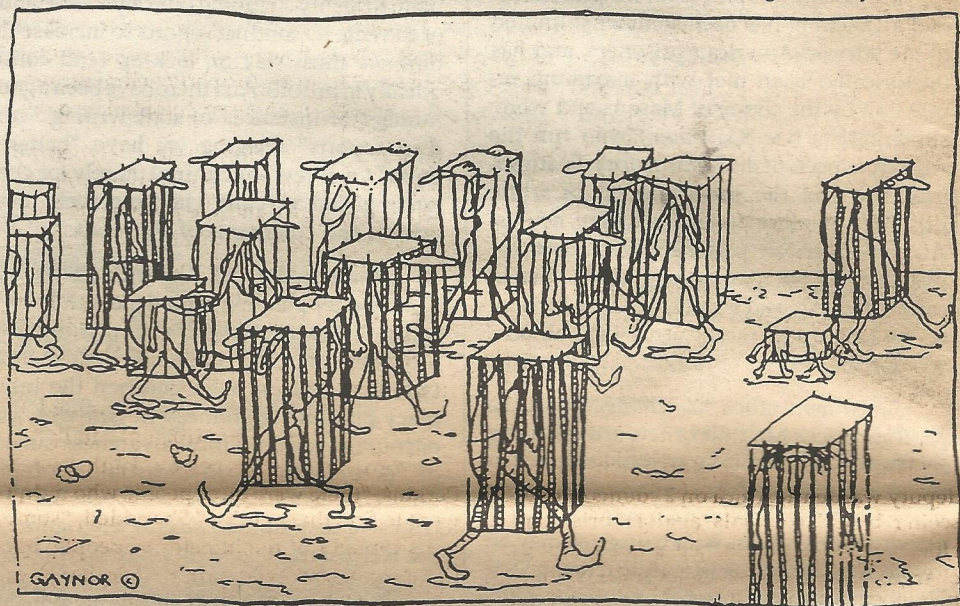
Hatari wa' Haki N/A (POW)

SP#78901

Lock Bag-R (ACSU)

Rahway, NJ 07065

* On Nov/6/91, officials at Trenton State Prison allege to have found 8 hacksaw blades amongst Hatari's property. The property had been in storage 9 days, and was thoroughly searched prior to being put in storage, with nothing of a contraband nature present at the time. He was subsequently charged with attempted escape, and given 18 more months in lock-up, under "extreme" high-security status. ∞



Campaign of Exposure continues in Angola

Comrades, since my prior letter to you, the Campaign of Exposure has been (and still is) working very hard to expose and publicize the oppressive and murderous program (better known as the "Behavior Modification Program") currently in effect at Camp J, extended lockdown (a notorious punitive cellblock here at the LA State Penitentiary). The way this oppressive and murderous program is supposed to work is that the subject (the prisoner participating in this program) is going to be "rewarded" for his progress (obedience) by moving from three different levels (each level will have various privileges.) Once the subject completes the third level, he will be eligible for reclassification to a non-punitive lockdown.

What makes this matter even worse is the fact that the pigs (the Louisiana Department of Justice and the Louisiana Department of Corrections) claim that they have initiated this program to better Camp J, extended lockdown. But that is a lie. The pigs' sole purpose for initiating this program is to **break a prisoner's spirit**. This is nothing new because they (the pigs) have been trying to do this for many years now.

The Campaign of Exposure is currently writing various newspapers (both in Louisiana and in other states) requesting that they give us some support in exposing the true nature of the program currently in effect here at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. With their (the newspapers') support in this cause, the public will become aware of the oppressive and murderous program currently in effect here at this prison (as well as the pigs' real purpose for instituting it). Furthermore, the public will become aware of the fact that these

pigs (the Louisiana Department of Justice and the Department of Corrections) are always instituting measures (a very good example is the program mentioned in this letter) to **break, torture and legally kill (murder)** the prisoners confined to this prison.

Comrades, no matter how hard these pigs try to discourage us (the members of the Campaign of Exposure) from moving forward in exposing and correcting the injustices here at this prison, we will always fight until the very end! Forward Ever, Backward Never!

I'm going to bring this letter to a close for now. Please take care and always remember that the Campaign of Exposure appreciates your friendship and concern.

Power to the people!

In struggle and solidarity,
Reginald W. Myer DOC #109396
Camp D, Hawk 4-Left-2
Angola, LA 70712

Angola prisoner needs support

Recently, I received a letter from you concerning your willingness to print an updated report on our plight. Since then, I have received a letter (dated for Nov/27/91) from Ernest Glover, a brother who was a party to our original report, where he stated that currently he is under vicious attack by his keepers. In his letter he informed me that on Sept/16/91, Oct/6/91 and Nov/26/91, he was

brutally and cowardly assaulted by several pigs (namely: Captain Charles Stewart, Lt. Billy Orr, Lt. Spinner, Sgt. Hulbert and Sgt. Small), while in full restraints (handcuffs and shackles).

He noted in part, "Comrade, I need some support quickly. They're trying to do me in." In this same letter, further on, he stated in part, "I am in extreme danger. Plus, I am alone..." Knowing that this brother is being attacked because of his past activist work to help expose and publicize the draconian and repressive conditions at Camp J extended lockdown, I worry that they (the above named pigs) may wind up beating him to death. Ernest will not be beaten or scared into submission, and the pigs know this. Thus they subject him to attack until he is either transferred outside Camp J to another camp here at plantation Angola, irreparably crippled or murdered.

We wish for concerned folks (especially our friends and comrades) at large to contact the following individuals, and raise their concern for the well-being (and plight) of Brother Ernest. In addition, we ask that the writer demand a prompt and fair investigation into the aggression against this brother.

The Campaign of Exposure
Albert "Chui" Clark
DOC #79909
CCR, Upper B-Tier, Cell-5
Louisiana State Penitentiary
Angola, LA 70712

Write or telephone the following:

John P. Whitley, Warden
Administration Building
Louisiana State Penitentiary
Angola, LA 70712
phone (504) 665-4411

Bruce N. Lynn, Secretary
Louisiana Department of Corrections
POB 94304, Capitol Station
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9304
phone (504) 342-8760 ∞

These trials are over but the injustices continue...

Attica

On Feb/4th, a jury in Buffalo, N.Y. rendered its verdict bringing an end to the 4-month long Attica civil suit. The civil suit brought against four state and government officials was to determine their liability for the state-orchestrated massacre that crushed the 1971 Attica prison rebellion. Thirty-nine people were killed and 80 people wounded. Collectively, the prisoners who survived the raid, (known as the Attica Brothers) are seeking 2.8 million dollars in damages. The verdict which found only one of the four defendants guilty ends a trial characterized by a series of judicial errors which have worked to deny the survivors of the massacre full justice.



Found guilty was Karl Pheil, former deputy warden at Attica on 2 counts of overseeing brutal reprisals against prisoners. However the jury returned a not guilty on charges that Corrections Commissioner Russel G. Oswald failed to provide for adequate medical after the raid. The jury could not come to a unanimous decision about the two other defendants, former warden Vincent Mancusi and Major John Monahan, the former Commissioner of the New York State police, who led the raid on the prison. Nonetheless the jury did rule that the prisoners did suffer "cruel and unusual punishment" and generally were denied adequate medical care.

The verdict represents a partial victory insofar as it establishes liability and consequently paves the way for compensation in a

subsequent trial. However, the failure to find fault on the part of all 4 defendants represents a real set back after 20 years of struggle.

The ability of three of the defendants to avoid conviction in the face of overwhelming testimony and documentation of their guilt is the result of a series of judicial irregularities conducted by Judge John T. Elfvin in an overall effort to deny the plaintiffs justice.

These judicial irregularities began with the judge's first voirdire of the jury, which is the process by which a judge is supposed to identify and eliminate jurors who have bias or prejudices that would affect their ability to render a fair judgement. Completely absent from the judge's voirdire of the first set of jurors were questions that would have identified any anti-prisoner or racial prejudice. Ignoring repeated requests by the Attica

Brothers legal team that this group of jurors be disbanded, it was only through constant pressure that the judge voidired the second set of jurors properly, eliminating a number of potential jurors.

Nonetheless, it became apparent both in the jury's verdict and the statements of jurors after the trial that the conduct of the judge during the first voirdire allowed people with anti-prisoner prejudices onto the jury. These jurors evidently formed a small group of hardliners determined to prevent findings of liability. In

the words of jury foreperson, Faith Lester-Perkins, "there were three people who didn't want to find them guilty." She added, "some of us thought of the inmates as people, but there were a few who didn't." Another juror described three of the jurors as "intimidators".

If this was not enough to subvert justice, Judge Elfvin exasperated the jury's difficulties over the monumental volume of evidence by leaving for a vacation in the Barbados a week after deliberations started. Jurors were then forced to ask him questions concerning evidence and legal questions via a speaker phone set up in the courtroom. In addition, he answered these questions in such a way as to influence the jury in favour of the defendants. On Jan/23, he attempted to speed the delib-

continued on page 19

Mohawk

Two Mohawk Warriors were convicted in the first major trial arising out of the siege of Mohawk territory by the Quebec police and Canadian army during the summer of 1990. Ronald (Lasagna) Cross and Gordon (Noriega) Lazore were found guilty of weapons charges, aggravated assault and assault causing bodily harm against other Mohawks which occurred during the 79 day stand off. They were found not guilty of uttering death threats against soldiers as the armed Warriors faced off against the even more heavily armed army. A third man, Roger Lazore, was acquitted on the ten charges that he faced.

The most serious charges against Cross and Gordon Lazore, rioting and obstruction of justice, were thrown out earlier in the proceedings when Judge Benjamin Greenberg of the Quebec Superior Court ruled that the Crown had failed to properly disclose evidence involving hundreds of hours of police videotape. This, along with the acquittal of Roger Lazore, throws into doubt the Crown's (the prosecution) case in the trial starting in March for 43 more Mohawks. Much of the evidence that was to be used against them was thrown out at this trial. Unfortunately, the lack of funds is severely hampering the preparation of a defense for the upcoming trial.

As two of the most prominent Warriors, Cross and Gordon Lazore will probably receive substantial sentences. And the trial itself showed that the Canadian government has no respect for the sovereignty of the Mohawk nation. It was the Quebec police who attacked the Mohawks with automatic rifles. It was the army who threatened and tried to intimidate the Mohawks. It is the Quebec police who brutalized the Mohawks after their surrender and who continue to harass and beat Mohawks and continue to surround the Mohawk communities as an armed force. The Warriors carried their rifles in self-defense, but the

state will never allow anyone to defend themselves from their attacks.

The following is from a statement, written by Kahn-Tineta Horn released after the trial by the Mohawk Nation Office:

The politically motivated trial, in which Judge Greenberg pleaded with the jury to convict the three political warriors, in which he dismissed all the evidence in favour of the three men, violating over and over again all their rights, has come to an end. It was a prosecutorial strike force which was meant to put our men in jail. These prosecutions are the



signs of a political program that aims to eliminate or pacify the most radical elements of the Indian movement. Continuous harassment by Canadian and Quebec "death squads" around the Mohawk territories help to promote this climate of harassment. The criminalization of social and political struggles aims to penalize the activity as well as the Indian consciousness that produces them.

The "anti-Mohawk" tactics inside and outside the court primarily seek to divert attention away from the legality of the Mohawk Nation's struggle. Political power as it is exercised through the Canadian parliament, the government, the parties and the institutions of the state is a system which can best be described as "parliamentary fascism".

Parliamentary fascism is the public's tolerance of the state using violent oppressive measures to maintain its power. It institutionalizes systemic repression of opposition so that people, like the Indian people, are helpless prey of the state and its owners. The Mohawks dynamically defending themselves and their lands from police attacks are outcasts, labelled as criminals and terrorists. The trial of three Warriors is a clear attempt to criminalize anything that is not "acceptable" to them.

Democracy does not try to abolish protests, but to make them harmless, picturesque occurrences, as the Oka crisis was. Any serious challenge, or questioning, is deemed dangerous and subsequently isolated, stripped of its ideological content and portrayed by mainstream agencies as "mindless hooliganism". In the Oka crisis, the government hired public relations firms to "bash" the Mohawks throughout and after the event.

The state keeping political issues out of this trial is the desperate act of a fearful nation that is in a state of "dysfunctional democracy", practised on those within its society who refuse to live in isolation, or abide or live through the mercy of the state. ∞

Richard Williams

On Friday, Dec/13, in a courtroom in Somerville, New Jersey, anti-imperialist political prisoner Richard Williams was convicted for the 1981 killing of a New Jersey state trooper. Richard, a member of a group of captured revolutionaries known as the Ohio 7, is already serving a long sentence for the actions of the United Freedom Front, a clandestine group which claimed responsibility for the bombings of U.S. corporate and military targets in the early 1980s. He was being retried for the shooting after a jury in 1987 could not reach a unanimous decision.

The conviction came despite strong testimony from Ohio 7 comrades and political prisoners Ray Levasseur and Tom Manning. Tom admits to shooting the cop in self-defence and denies that Richard was even there. Important testimony refuting the state's story also came from police dog handlers who tracked footprints in the snow leaving the scene. Certainly the dozen or more police and "correc-

tions" officers surrounding Richard in the courtroom every day (not to mention the heavily armed troopers and snipers outside) must have influenced the jury to conclude that he was at least as dangerous as the prosecution's weak circumstantial evidence made him out to be. Pieces of key defense evidence from the first trial which were mysteriously "lost" while in federal custody probably made their decision easier as well.

On February 6th, Richard was sentenced to 30 years to life in front of a courtroom filled with so many cops that it was described by one supporter as a "pork-fest". Despite the over representation of police in the crowd, the courtroom was silent as Richard delivered a strong and passionate political statement to the court. In fact, his statement was so powerful that the judge felt the need to spend ten minutes trying to refute its contents before pronouncing sentence.

The judge went to great lengths to "prove" that Richard and Tom and their comrades were not comparable to those who fought in the American Revolution because those people had no choice but to take up arms, whereas today the U.S. has the ballot box as a tool for political change. This statement was apparently made in all seriousness. Certainly the

"pork-fest" in evidence in the courtroom, and indeed the incredible militarism and police intimidation which has characterized all of the trials of the Ohio 7, demonstrate the true face lurking behind such claims to the "democratic principles" of the country.

As has been demonstrated time and time again, the state will stop at nothing to silence people who raise their voices in resistance. Despite government pronouncements that this is a "criminal" case and has nothing to do with politics, the behaviour of federal and state prosecutors, police and prisons to get a conviction say everything to the contrary.

While the trial is over, the struggle continues, and those of us on the outside must continue to build support for our imprisoned comrades while increasing our own resistance. We must continue to fight against the government's attempts to criminalize resistance struggles. The ability of the courts to convict and bury our comrades in the dungeons of the modern era should be yet another demonstration to those of us on the outside of the work that needs to be done. ∞

Rick Lines

PWAs take care of their own, while the support network grows

The continuing struggle for prisoners' rights concerning HIV/AIDS education, treatment and prevention has progressed in various forms through North American prisons and communities. While some programs are the work of prisoners themselves, various government officials have acknowledged the issue at hand and have talked about proposals. Meanwhile, grassroots community groups continue to fight for what amounts to be nothing more than reasonable and necessary policies. However, there remain some factors that need much debate and attention. Perhaps an analysis of progress within the struggle on the inside and outside fronts will encourage everyone directly involved and affected to re-evaluate their thinking and action so that a consensus can be reached. Only this will enable us to defeat the continuing conflicts that prolong the struggle.

A recent article, *Educating Against AIDS at Pleasanton* (see *PNS* #33) by prisoner Linda Evans illustrates the effectiveness of prisoner peer counselling and education that was first initiated at Bedford Hills, where imprisoned women won a long fight to implement their AIDS Counselling and Education (ACE) program. The report from FCI-Pleasanton not only shows that prisoner support programs are the most effective, but acknowledges the continuing need for people on the outside to help fight for: humane conditions for prisoners, early release for prisoners dying from AIDS, education and preventative measures. No one should have to suffer and die from the virus in isolation in prison.

Along these same lines, a particular initiative at Dorchester Penitentiary near Moncton, New Brunswick needs mention. Lifer and HIV+ prisoner Gerald Benoit asserts that he refuses to be mistreated because of his disease and has been successful in forming a prisoner group involving community activists that meet monthly to "discuss our very real emotional needs and any other problems that may arise." The group has received the attention of the entire prison population, administration and health care, including the local media. There is no segregation of the PWAs there, and it would be safe to say that that is possibly because everyone concerned has been educated through Gerald's initiative. This model tells us that once people are aware of the explicit facts, they are no longer afraid. It is also notable that the PWAs (people with AIDS) are receiving medical care with the availability of AZT, consultation with the prison doctor, high energy diets and extra bedding and clothing. Gerald reports that since a workshop he conducted in November, concerned prisoners have been asking for, and receiving, testing

for the virus. There are outside group members involved and overall there is much support for the cause both inside the prison and within the communities of New Brunswick. There are some very real and important lessons to be learned from the SIDAID Support Group for other Canadian prisoners, administrators and support staff alike.

On the other hand, Ontario regional (federal) penitentiary and provincial prison reports illustrate the continuing fears and attitudes of prisoners that prevent necessary measures to be taken. At Millbrook Institution for example, one PWA is dying in segregation because the general population is not receptive to PWAs being within the population. There are two PWAs there and they continue to be punished with segregation for nothing other than their HIV+ status. The one prisoner living with AIDS is visited once every four hours by a guard who is often heard saying, "I'll be back in four hours to check if you are still alive."

Meanwhile, prison outreach worker Ron Shore, (Kingston AIDS Project) reports his conclusions from the past year's visits to local prisons. Young offenders have been much more receptive to the education, while prisoners in the penitentiaries don't even want to talk about the issues, let alone get involved in the struggle. Again it is a case of misconceptions, homophobia (fear of homosexuality) and general fear, which will only result in spreading the virus between IV-drug users. The most underscored concern is the fact that prisoners giving and receiving tattoos have no idea of the implications of their practice of sharing what could be infected inks. Those involved in sexual activity are certainly making some effort, but often to be ostracized by fellow prisoners. Ron's efforts continue to chip away at the barriers to initiating necessary programs.

On the political front in Canada, federal Solicitor-General Douglas Lewis announced in November that "in a bid to stem the spread of sexually transmitted AIDS, condoms will be distributed to prisoners." The Toronto-based community group, Prisoners With AIDS/HIV Support Action Network (PASAN), immediately held meetings and press conferences to demand and plan what promises to be a comprehensive strategy to address the crisis. A coalition was soon formed that included Toronto groups such as ACT (AIDS Committee of Toronto), and AIDS Action Now. Their meetings were attended by community health workers. PASAN representative Julia Barnett was contacted by provincial health officials to sit down and talk in hopes of planning and implementing policy in the near future. The list of organizations

and individuals now in contact with PASAN covers several pages; it includes the well established Elizabeth Fry and John Howard Societies who have been working with prisoners inside as well as upon release. Meetings are scheduled for the near future to finalize the coalition's comprehensive plans and strategy, which will also be discussed with federal Government officials. The question of when condoms will be given to the prisoners was immediately raised, while PASAN is uncompromising in their demand for needle exchanges and dental dams in prisons. Perhaps reluctant prisoners will see from these efforts that they should get their own act together.

Another effort that is trying to address the main

issue of HIV/AIDS education and to answer some prisoners' questions, is the American Civil Liberties initiative, the National Prison Project. They have put together an excellent pamphlet, *AIDS and prisons: The Facts*. Many prisoners have been asking for explicit information. The pamphlet is available by writing to:

The National Prison Project
1616 P. St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Canadian prisoners can get a copy of the free pamphlet by writing to:

Kingston AIDS Project
Box 120
Kingston, Ont K7L 4V6.

True to their announcement last year, Canadian federal prison officials began their initiative to distribute condoms in the federal prisons on Jan/1/92. Because there has been no policy for the distribution methods though, the various facilities are using their own ingenuity to get the condoms to the prisoners. It hardly needs mention that most initiatives involving the systems' ingenuity are all screwed up. And there are no deviations from the norm this time either. At one maximum security facility, prisoners are required to put in a request to the health centre so they can go get their condoms "packaged in a plain brown envelope"!! This method is itself a deterrent for anyone who wants to get a condom as they must formally give their name to the very people they do not and have no reason to trust. The idea of putting in a request also raises the assumption that prisoners plan well in advance that they are going to be engaging in sexual activity, like they're going out on the town for the night so they better be prepared. Being locked in maximum security facilities just does not allow a prisoner to be making this sort of plan.

The whole issue of condom distribution and with nothing more than instructions on the package to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS in prison is like using a band-aid to stop the bleeding from a gaping wound. First of all, it does nothing to help women in prisons. Furthermore, transmission of the virus through IV-drug use and tattooing is not being addressed. These practices are much more dangerous in transmitting HIV/AIDS than sex between prisoners, so there needs to be needle exchange programs as well as a serious initiative to change the policy on tattoos inside prisons. Presently it is considered contraband to have the inks and equipment prisoners use for tattooing. As it is essentially an art form, it needs to be placed under the directives of other hobby-crafts. This will stop prisoners from sharing equipment and inks that can and do get contaminated using contemporary methods. Sharing infected inks is one of the methods of transmitting the virus that prisoners haven't been overly concerned about and they must begin to think about what they are doing. The fact that officials recognize the need for explicit education on safe condom use by including instructions on the package is good, but one must consider how much can actually be said on a small package. Again, there is the need for education in a much broader sense, for staff and prisoners alike. It is good news that the federal government has finally lived up to its promise, but handing out condoms is not addressing all the aspects of this grave concern.

While the struggle is certainly far from over, it is safe to say that direct action is working. In many cases, it has been a prolonged battle with prison administrations, but time and time again, prisoners are addressing the issues effectively and winning over the reluctant powers that be. There is no

reason why prisoners should suffer the tortures of isolation. Nor should they not receive medical treatment or prevention and education. And the so-called professionals should be paying attention to the powerful lessons already learned.

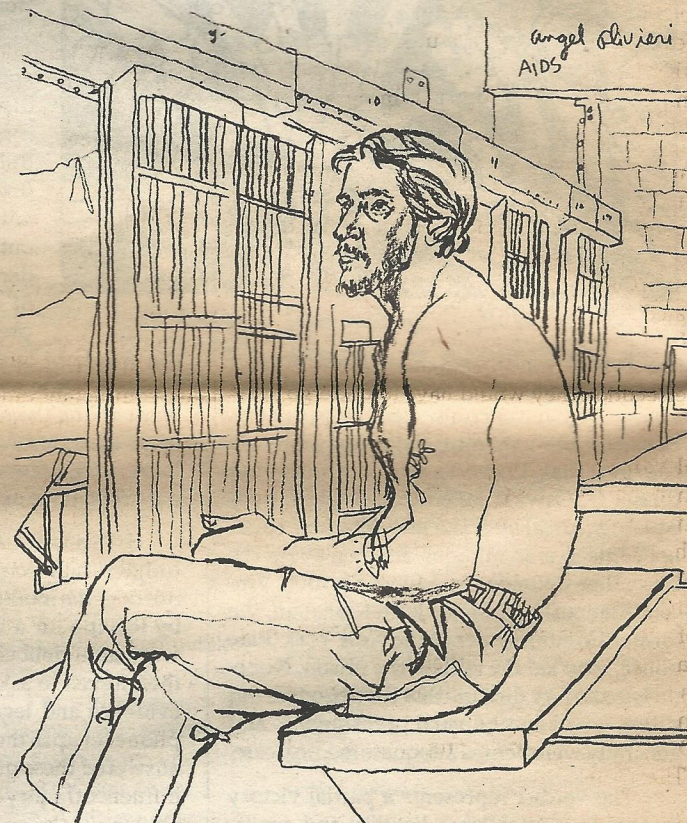
This writer commends all the efforts mentioned and unmentioned. These include continuing legal actions on behalf of PWAs in British Columbia, prison outreach in Montreal (ACT-UP Montreal) and all individuals and groups on the front lines. Furthermore, I recommend anyone concerned to write for more information to the contacts listed below for support, encouragement and/or even to simply lend support, or to say that they are committed to seeing the positive end to the crisis of HIV/AIDS in prisons everywhere.

Fortunately, I'm not living with AIDS, but certainly **livid with rage**.

Zoltan Lugosi
Box 57172 Jackson Station
Hamilton, Ont L8P 4X1

Publications:
PWA-Rag by James Magner
POB 2161
Jonesboro, GA 30237

PWA Coalition Newsline
31 W. 26th St.
New York, NY 10010
(free to people with HIV)

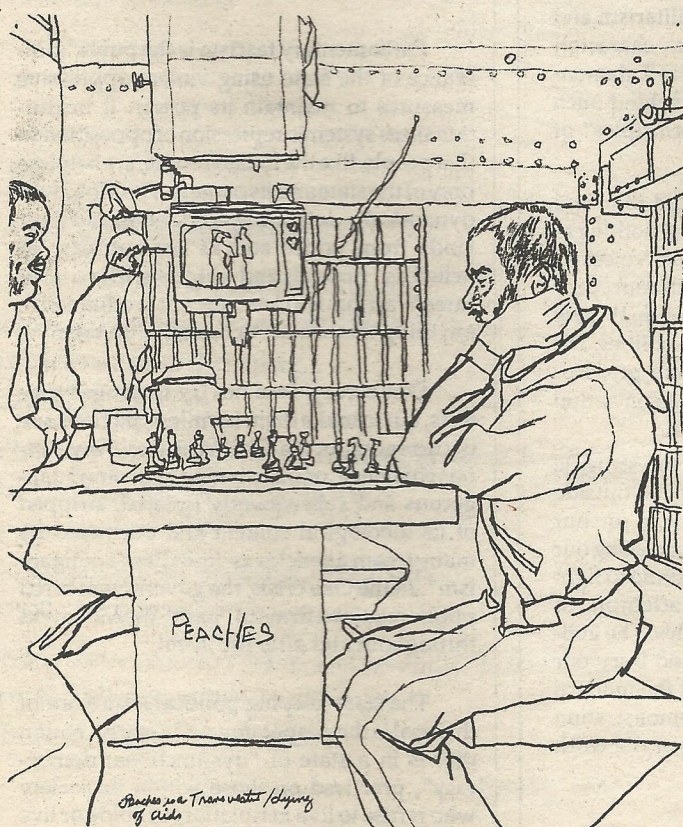


Prisoner Justice Day — a call for solidarity

The Canadian experience around solidarity on Prisoners' Justice Day, has been tremendous and there is increasing solidarity with work stoppages and fasting on August 10th within Canadian prisons. However, during the rest of the year, solidarity within prisoner-communities has been declining rapidly for the past twenty odd years. It is time to rebuild community among prisoners everywhere to fight the system that is using divide and conquer tactics to further oppress prisoners. Prisoners could write about the increasing lack of solidarity, what it was like in their past experiences, what it is like now, and how we might instill solidarity to break the divisions of class race and sex and of course, this thing about "protective custody" where many prisoners do not belong. Anyone wishing to comment on this, or wanting to contribute to *The Dawn of Prisoners' Solidarity* as a focus for Prisoners' Justice Day '92, please contact:

Zoltan Lugosi
(see address above)

Though Prisoners' Justice Day is a Canadian event, Zoltan, who himself has been recently paroled from prison, would like to hear from American prisoners as well.



“The Year of the Indian” thing

On Sept/24/91, Governor David Walters proclaimed 1992 as “the Year of the Indian”. The director of the National Museum of the American Indian, W. Richard West Jr., of the Cheyenne nation, called the declaration a commentary on the quincentenary. Wilma Mankiller, Chief of the Cherokee nation, joined in the cruel hoax, as did State Senator Enoch Kelly Haney, a noted Seminole artist. Indian “leaders” agreed that this public relations strategy would cause the tourist dollars to roll into Oklahoma. The politicians chortled with glee; the businessmen licked their lips.

Only eight days earlier, on Sept/16, Gary Maynard, Director of the Department of Corrections, made his contribution to the “year of the Indian” thing by declaring that Indians in his prisons all across the state of Oklahoma would have to either cut their hair “voluntarily” or his guards would chain them, beat them up and cut their hair by force and violence. The religious exemptions that had been issued to only twenty out of eleven thousand prisoners were declared null and void, and the few Indians who had been able to avoid the violence of the guards’ clubs because they were able to prove through overwhelming documentation that their hair is sacred to their religion will now have to partake of ol’ scissorhands’ odd behavior known as “The Year of the Forced Hair Cutting” thing. (This is his personal anti-religious-Indian ceremony and he says it makes his jails more secure!!)

All the Indians I’ve talked with believe that the Corrections Director’s continuing campaign to destroy American Indian traditional religion is a racist attack born out of ignorance. I know that there are many Indians in Oklahoma’s prisons who are so intimidated by the guards’ threats that they are afraid to even admit their religious beliefs because of the racial discrimination and religious persecution they would have to undergo.

When it comes to religion, the Indian plays much the same role in American society that the Jews played in Hitler’s Germany. Like the miner’s canary, we Indians mark the shift from fresh air to poison gas in the atmosphere of religious persecution. Like Jews who forewent the yarmulke under the Nazis, a lot of Indian prisoners under Gary Maynard’s racist policies have cut their hair out of fear. It is shocking that such a thing can be happening to the original peoples of this land while Oklahoma cynically prepares to celebrate “The Year of the Indian.”

Many, if not most, of the 634 Indians in Oklahoma’s prisons would continue to adopt

the traditional hair length if they had the same freedom of religion given to Oklahoma’s Christian prisoners. One can scarcely doubt that Gary Maynard would not have banned the wearing of long hair if it were of religious significance in the Christian faith, and if the wearing of it by Christians served as an expression of their faith and as a spiritual comfort to them.

For nearly 500 years the religion of my Grandfathers has been trampled upon and disrespected by the sea pirates and many of their descendants who invaded my shores so long ago. For those of us who continue to practice our ancient religion the road is rocky and the way is hard even in the best of times, but for the American Indian in McAlester Prison we have been cast into a spiritual wastebasket where every aspect of our religion is denied.

The head jailer of this prison system views my religion with contempt and suspicion, and he has raised suppressing my religion to the station of a moral crusade. Here at Oklahoma State Prison my religion is against the law, and now even the hair on my head which is sacred and must never be cut, except when in mourning, has been ordered removed from my head by force and violence. Since the rest of my religion has been banned, when my head is shaved my connection to the creator will be destroyed. When they steal the very hair from my head I will have nothing left for them to steal.

History teaches that religious suppression leads to rebellion. Why would our keepers want to promote rebellion, anger, frustration and unhappiness? Do the jailers of America fear our religion or do they try to stamp it out because at times it seems to be the only thing we have and they would rather see us completely empty? Whatever their reasons they have tried to eradicate our religion for nearly 500 years but they continue to fail.

Our Mother the Earth will continue to give comfort to women and men and other animals long after this experiment called America has consumed itself by its own greed, and the religion of my Grandfathers will live on in the hearts of my children’s children’s children because it is the truth and truth can never die.

*Standing Deer
McAlester Prison
Box 97-83947
McAlester, OK 74502 ~*

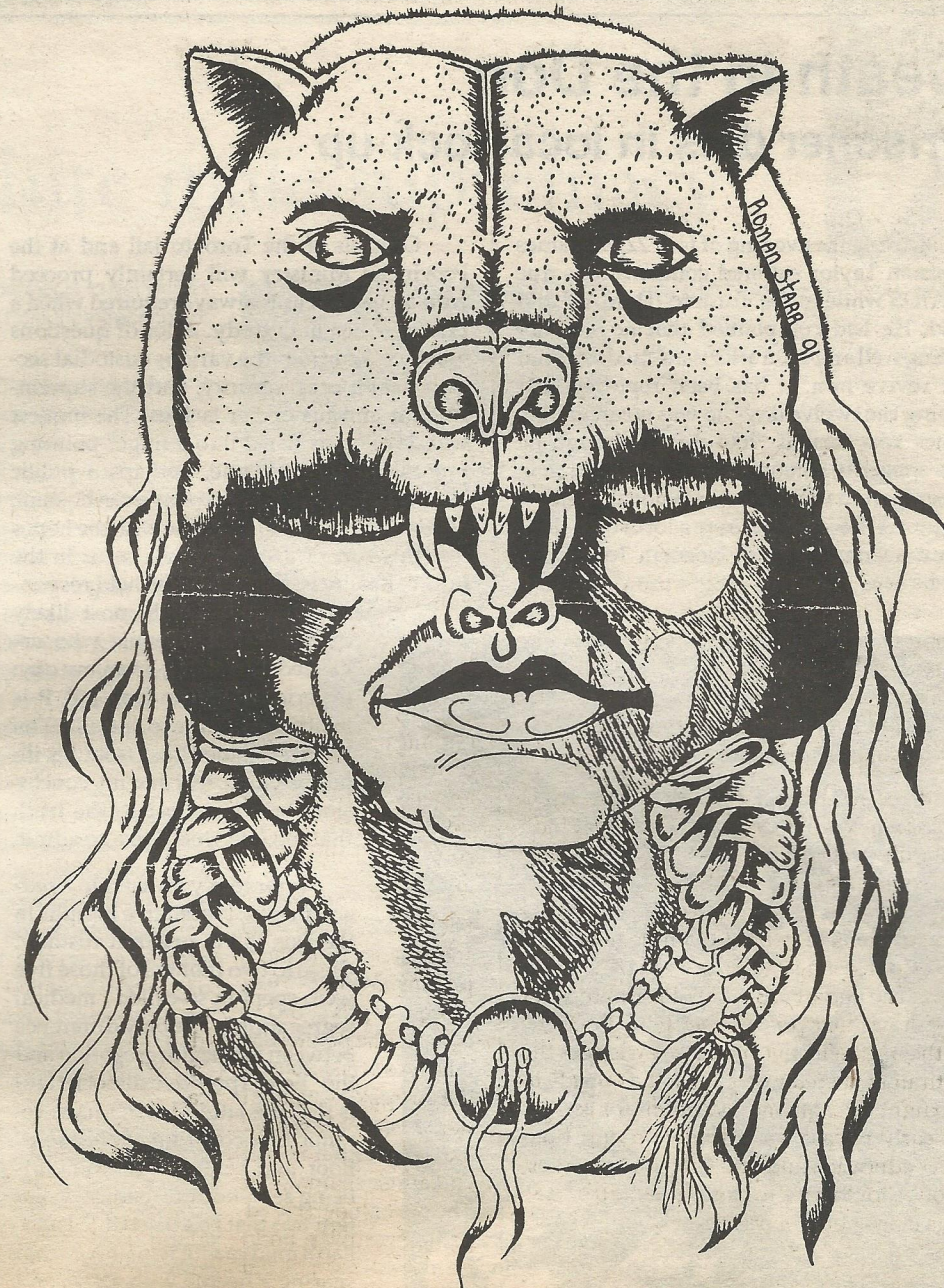
Greetings from New Brunswick

Greetings my brothers, sisters, supporters and friends,

Tansi! I am writing this letter to express my outrage over the convictions of our two Mohawk brothers (see page 15 for more details, ed.). No doubt there will be more to come because we as a oyate (people) continue to be judged in a justice system that is not a part of our oyate (people) in any way. There is no understanding of our oyate (people); there is no respect or honour for our oyate (people) or way of life. Our oyate (people) are being judged and punished for conducting our ways and carrying out our responsibilities as our warriors did defending the Mohawk Territories from invasion and assault. The Suréte du Québec (provincial police) and military directed by the governments of Quebec and Canada are the ones who are guilty by our laws and by international law for their assault and invasion of another Sovereign nation — the Mohawk nation. Yet our oyate (people) are punished for the defense of their nation.

We as a oyate (people) must again, under the leadership of our traditional oyate (people), take full control over our lives from those who never had a right to have it in the first place. These oyate (people) are the non-native governments, Native political leaders, chiefs and Band Councils who were created by the non-native governments. We must start to govern our nations the natural way of our oyate (people). We must exercise our sovereignty to the fullest. We must bring back our sacred ways to our oyate (people). We must exercise all our inherent rights as First Nations. We need not request or negotiate permission from anyone for no government, race of oyate (people) or religion has a legal or moral right to suspend or take away what our Creator gave to our oyate (people).

We don’t have to answer anyone but our oyate (people). We don’t have to explain how the governing of our oyate (people) works to Canada. If they choose to respect and honour our oyate (people) by recognizing our peoples’ inherent rights as we see them and settling land claims in a respectful and honourable way, then our Nations can work together in respect and honor but we need no agreement to exercise what is ours now. In taking full control back over our lives, we must always be ready to defend our borders and to protect our oyate (people) and ways. We must



Native Sacred Circle Society in New Hampshire needs some help

Greetings Brothers and Sisters:

My name is FreeBird, I am a prisoner in the New Hampshire State Prison. I have fought for prisoners’ rights for many years now. I have been shipped out of state to federal prisons all over the U.S.. I’ve been put in cells with known enemies and have been beaten by guards over and over. I am writing on behalf of the Native Sacred Circle. We started the Native Sacred Circle about a year ago. It had been tried in the past but the warden shipped the men out of state for fighting for our rights. We now have Spiritual leaders inside the walls, all are volunteers as the

prison won’t even pay gas expenses for travel. We have the Sacred Pipe and a 3 hour meeting once a week in the prison’s old Death house. We can smudge and use the pipe, but only the men behind the walls. The men and women in lower security have almost no religious freedom. We are allowed to wear headbands and beads, and that is all we can have in our cells, or on us. We are still fighting for the Drum and Sweat Lodge, and other sacred objects that are considered contraband. We can also wear long hair, but only behind the walls in the maximum security section. (The commissioner said it’s comparable to an Indian entering military service. If he joins or is drafted, certain rules must be followed.)

I started a native culture group to help teach about our Native ways of life in a traditional sense. We need books to help us learn about our culture. Newsletters and any other information to help us fight for our rights. I am trying to get a Native American library started as the prison library doesn’t let us take Native American books out. They are so paranoid as to have no loan programs with public libraries in or out of state. Our spiritual leaders aren’t even trusted to loan us books, all have to be donated to prisoners or the prison. Our spiritual leaders and myself are writing letters in support of the Brothers in McAlester prison who are being denied all religious freedoms and practices. Letters are also going out in support of Leonard Peltier, Freedom Fighter. We also need support from other groups, prisoners, brothers and sisters, who have travelled the road we now walk. We need names of attorneys who might take a prison case for religious freedom.

I thank the Great Spirit for sending us spiritual leaders who share their love and wisdom with us. And who sacrifice so much of their time to be with us behind the walls. Thanks to Shama PeeMee, Chief He Who Walks Tall, Medicine Story and Ellika.

Freebird Berube #18271
Box 14
Concord, NH 03301

as First Nations give our Warriors what is needed to carry out their responsibilities and duties if such time arises but we pray it does not. But with the history of the past and present we must be prepared at all times to defend and protect our past, present and future.

We, like our ancestors, are peaceful oyate (people) but we, like our ancestors, are strong oyate (people) because of the blood that flows through our bodies that make us proud of who we are as a oyate (people). We can destroy this continuing genocide against our oyate (people) if we once again let our sacred ways take control in all parts of our lives. And if we live and die as those who we were born to be, then our oyate (people) will finally have victory over this continuing genocide, a sacred gift for the generations to come.

Pilamanya (thank you) for hearing my words from my (cante) heart. Any comments or questions, please write.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse

*Hawk of the Winds
First Nations Warrior Society
573 St. Marys St.
Fredericton, NB E3A 2X5 ~*

Death in the Don Prisoner dies in local lock-up

During the evening of Jan/22/92, James Norman Taylor suffered complications due to AIDS while in the Toronto (Don) Jail and died. He had complained that he was not feeling well and soon after para-medics could not revive him. It has been reported that during the twelve days he was incarcerated, James was treated "like dirt" although he was allegedly receiving medical attention in a segregation unit. James was not at a critical stage of AIDS, and there are a lot of questions about his death. James Norman Taylor did not have to die!!



Officials at the Toronto Jail and at the Provincial Ministry will certainly proceed with an inquest as is always required when a prisoner dies in custody. A lot of questions will be asked from the various custodial sectors: health care, security, and the superintendent and his or her lackies. The inquest will develop as usual into a finger-pointing process of laying blame, perhaps a public inquiry will proceed, there may even be some valid recommendations made with the hopes that this sort of death will not occur in the future. Reality is, no one will be held responsible, even though most likely there are some people who neglected their duty. From my own experiences at the Don Jail, it is legitimate for me to speculate on just why James died from his illness prematurely and my conclusions will be closer to the truth than people would like to admit.

Prior to my transfer to a federal prison, I spent five months in the Don Jail in pre-trial custody. Close to two months of those five were spent in so-called "medical segregation". The only difference between medical segregation and the "hole" (punitive dissociation) is that the latter doesn't have ceramic tiles covering all the walls, floor and ceiling. My crime for being sentenced to medical isolation was that I revealed that I once had a mild case of hepatitis B from sharing a needle with a carrier. I was not then nor ever have been a carrier, contagious or a risk to anyone. Still, I was not only isolated in prison, but had to appear in court on numerous occasions with a mask so no one would

catch my alleged disease. The guards were deathly afraid of me. So I used to think, as I dwelling in seg, that if I was to be in the need of some immediate attention (like if the place was on fire), more than likely people in charge would be afraid to come near me. Too bad I didn't think of it then, or I might have been able to use it successfully to escape. I could just imagine James, perhaps passed out in his seg cell, with all the guards panicking until some health care staff took the initiative to get him some help. Someone may have even figured he was faking and ignored him until the next shift came on. After being notified of something being wrong, I'm sure the nurse or whoever, probably took their sweet time to attend to him. It is more than likely that the "log book" that would confirm some of these speculations will mysteriously disappear.

One of the reasons they have medical wards in prison is so that when the doctor arrives in the morning, he or she can first go through the wing to scrutinize the sick and attend to them. The expectation is that the doctor also does this in medical seg. However, during the eight weeks I spent there, I only saw the doctor twice, and my neighbour who almost died of hepatitis A (which was not diagnosed earlier) saw him four times. Although I was in medical seg, I had to put in requests (like any other bureaucratic paperwork, this is a lengthy procedure) to see the doctor, and even then I saw a nurse instead. I did receive the tranquilizers I asked for though and they are most likely what kept me calm during that hellish period.

In the area where I was isolated, there were two cells. My neighbour was a guy named Mike, who I had recently used with on the street, so it's safe to say we had the same virus. One day they brought in another prisoner to use the phone in the hall outside our cells. This dude lived across the hall in seg too. A little while later, Mike used the phone, which is most likely when he caught the hepatitis A that caused the internal bleeding in his stomach. Fortunately he had a good

lawyer to demand that he be rushed to the hospital and Mike recovered, but just barely.

There is a lot to be learned from these incidents. You see, Mike and I were both veterans of the prison system. We both had lawyers whom we knew would pull the necessary strings when and if we needed a judge's order to obtain necessities. We both knew that to make sure we got food, a change of clothes and bedding, we had to bribe our fellow prisoners to take chances when they passed by our cells. We both knew that until we sometimes ranted and raved, put in requests to see the person in charge of the jail and wrote letters to the Ombudsperson, we just might not live through our period of segregation. Mike almost didn't make it. James obviously did not.

As I have said in the past, there is no school that teaches people how to do time. There are no instructions on how to survive in prison and no one asks you aside when you first get there to hand you a map or any sort of booklet with instructions. So it becomes a day-to-day learning experience, and unless you know something about the law and aggressively seek your rights, you sometimes end up sleeping on the floor and don't even get a meal. And there's no denying that if you go just a little bit too far with the wrong staff person in your demands, you might end up like James. The fact that most custodial staff are uneducated and therefore afraid of catching AIDS, would have made things a lot worse for James as well.

The coming inquest may reveal that prisons do not run as people suspect or how they are supposed to. For example, most prisoners are not aware of what is available to them. Even if a person is in for their second or third time, they will most likely not know that the law says they have specific rights. And if those rights are not upheld, there are provisions to rectify complicated situations that may arise. James obviously did not have the time to learn about all of this so now the question remains. "What is to be done to insure that this does not happen again and again?"

Zoltan Lugosi ∞

Reader questions whether the SLA should be honoured

Friends,

Thank you for the Sept/Oct issue of *PNS*. I am always impressed with the amount of research that goes into each issue. Each issue also contains a wealth of contact addresses and informative reports and essays. The only people documenting the work of prison activists are the prison activists themselves, and history will have only our words to refer to. Therefore an especially high degree of insight and integrity, historical perspective and commitment to the truth over political sympathy is required.

I believe that by presenting a sympathetic voice to the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), Sekou Imarobge-Mussau did not meet these standards, and by publishing this piece without commentary the editors erred by omission. While they masked their actions in political rhetoric, the S.L.A. didn't have a

quarter of the credibility of the other groups. Imarobge wrote about (including the Black Panther Party, among others).

I do not condone kidnapping as a means of achieving any political goal I am in agreement with, although I respect other's ability to hold the **opinion** that it has some validity (I have no respect for **kidnappers** — that's why I cannot but oppose prisons and the state!). It was the kidnapping of Patricia Hearst that the S.L.A. is most famous for, reason alone for me to have no common ground with them. During her initial months bound and blindfolded by the S.L.A. she was also repeatedly threatened with death, beaten, verbally abused and raped. Further reason I have no respect for them at all. In the course of their bank robberies they killed two people. These were not cops or guards (not that I would have much more sympathy for them (S.L.A.) if they were) but individuals who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Before they kidnapped Hearst they also shot a school superintendent, supposedly because he required students to carry a school ID (an oppressive act, but one meriting death?) They stole for "the revolution" — but they also considered themselves "the revolution" and kept it all.

I spent a lot of time this summer reading about the S.L.A. and asking people what they remember from that time. I hoped a lesson was learned in the blood of those who died as a result of the S.L.A. that wouldn't have to be repeated. If what they were is forgotten then it will happen again, and I don't want to remember later I didn't say anything against it. I see it as no contradiction to support prisoners and not support kidnappers, and that is how I would describe myself. I welcome all replies to this letter.

Trevor
P.O. Box 23061
Knoxville, TN 37933-1061

Integration — Canada's Penitentiaries in Chaos

It was shortly after 11:00 a.m. on March/26/91 when my brothers Gerry McDonald and David Warner would take their last breath of life. It was a callous and premeditated slaughter, performed by a trigger-happy "uniform" and his 10-gauge Winchester Defender shotgun.

The hostage-taking lasted just over 22 hours. Myself, Gerry and David took two guards and a "baby-killer" hostage. It was in all actuality an end result to a serious problem. In 1978 a committee studying the effects of placing "protective custody (p.c.)" prisoners into the general population recommended overwhelmingly to designate two strictly "p.c." institutions in Canada — Kingston Penitentiary and Prince Albert (Saskatchewan). This recommendation was finally instituted in 1981. Needless to say, the amount of bloodshed, especially in the maximum security prisons was dramatically reduced.

Life was fine...until 1988, when even though the government was fully aware of the effects previously displayed by integrating the maximums and most mediums. They sent in the buses anyway, at the same time attempting to make the "carrot" a little sweeter, in hopes of somehow minimizing resistance. It has obviously not been working as well as they would care to make many believe. The body count is growing and the personal determination by the "cons" grows daily behind these walls.

Almost a month after the hostage taking came to an end, and the callous execution of my brothers remained unquestioned, the local media in Prince Albert put together a mini-documen-



tary on the hostage taking, from the pigs' point of view of course. It was called *Twenty-two hours in hell*; The opening shot had a view of a prison wall overlooked by a tower, (all in grey) with streams of bright red blood seeping from its cracks. The show attempted to depict me and my brothers as ruthless, blood-thirsty psychopaths with little concern for anything.

Of the three of us, Gerry had been in Prince Albert the longest — a little over four months. We had all been placed there against our will, as many others still are. The hostage taking wasn't a matter of gaining "pleasure" through confinement — an insanity no one shares with the "man". If anything it was in hopes of sending a strong call to stop the suffering and the inhumanities we all "inside" must live with daily because of the policy of integrating p.c. prisoners with everyone else.

This letter, in a paper dedicated to the truth, is in memory of my two brothers who were lost. And the ones that this destructive policy has yet to take.

Shawn Murray
Special Handling Unit
246 Montée Gagnon C.P. 5550
Ste. Anne des Plaines, Quebec J0N 1H0 ∞

Prison News on the air

Toronto area readers take note, *Prison News Service* is taking to the air. On the first Wednesday of every month, *PNS* will be presenting news about political prisoners and the prison struggle in the U.S. We are filling one of the *Ecomedia* spots on the Wednesday *Word of Mouth* program at 7:00 P.M. on CKLN at 88.1 FM. *Through The Walls*, an anti-prison collective in Kingston, will be reporting on Canadian prisons in the same time slot on the third Wednesday of every month. The Monday *Word of Mouth* also has regular coverage of political prisoners and POWs in the U.S. They are currently arranging a series of interviews with some of the Black POWs which will be aired over the next few weeks.

Attica *continued from page 15*

eration process by ordering the jury to deliberate 13 hours every weekday and 7 hours on Saturdays. Later he abandoned this effort when it ran into resistance from jurors. Subsequently, the judge was ordered by his superiors to return from his vacation. However not before he had severely complicated the deliberation process with what the Attica Brothers' lawyer Joe Heath called "a series of legal errors" in his charge to the jury.

Combined, these two issues, along with the judge's persistent refusal to allow the defense to present different pieces of evidence, were sufficient to prevent a complete conviction of all four defendants. In fact, the evidence and testimony was so overwhelming, (the Attica Brass called a total of 50 witnesses, the defense only 20) that throughout the trial the defense was forced to rely on a strategy aimed at discrediting the testimony of prisoners based on the fact that they were (or had been) prisoners.

The Attica Brothers' legal team plan to appeal the verdict based on the judicial irregularities. Ironically, if they are successful,

the state will end up spending more money defending the various officials than the civil suit is seeking in compensation for the prisoner-victims of the attack. A second trial will be automatically held to determine the damages that will be awarded to the Attica Brothers because of the liability found against Pheil.

Akil Al-Jundi, one of the Attica Brothers who has been involved with the legal team, summarizes the trial: "After twenty years we haven't won the battle, but we are still in the fight. What we have is a partial victory. The jury found Karl Pheil responsible for the reprisals against prisoners. We were able to prove that we suffered cruel and unusual. That's a partial victory. We didn't win completely but we will continue to struggle and fight in upcoming legal battles. However, if you really want to understand Attica, and all it is, you can't separate it from the larger struggle of poor and oppressed people. Long after the Attica trials are over, we're still going to have to deal with the broader issue of prisons and prisoners' rights, or our political prisoners and prisoners of war...Attica is linked to the struggle for jobs, health care, education, etc. You can't separate it from the struggle of poor people, simple as that." ∞

Attica event in Toronto inspires many

More than two hundred people from many different local communities, attended a solidarity and educational evening on the Attica uprising in spite of windchill temperatures of minus twenty-five degrees. Dacajewiah, one of the Attica brothers and a Mohawk activist, showed that the courage and unity of the Attica prisoners in facing their oppressors still has the power to inspire twenty years later. Unfortunately, Akil al-Jundi, one of the scheduled speakers was turned back by the Canadian border guards who "didn't like his attitude". Dan Myers, one of the lawyers in the civil suit, described the legal side of the ongoing struggle for justice. A video, entitled *Attica*, which was shot at the time of the uprising and has much film footage of the four days, began the evening. The presence of Dacajewiah, who is currently organizing for the League of Indigenous nations, ensured that there would be a strong native element to the evening. We were particularly honoured by having Art Solomon, one of the main Ojibway elders in Ontario, attend the event and briefly speak.

The Attica event was co-sponsored by *PNS* along with the Leonard Peltier Canadian Defense Committee and the African-Caribbean Students Association. The strongest aspect of the evening was the number of individuals and groups who came together to make it a really powerful experience. In particular, a number of interviews and features about Attica on the local alternative radio stations, helped build the event, as well as greatly increasing the number of people who found out about this defining moment of resistance and repression in the U.S. ∞

Attention: Canadians in U.S. Prisons

The *PNS* has been receiving requests for information from Canadians in American prisons about the possibilities of transferring back to Canada to serve out their time. Canada and the U.S. have a treaty that allows for such transfers. Besides being closer to family or friends, or having better prison conditions, such prisoners hope that they would end up serving less time than if they completed their sentence in the U.S. This is particularly true for those prisoners who have received one of those incredibly vicious, decades-long sentences that the American authorities seem to enjoy handing out. Unfortunately, from what we hear, transferring back may not make much difference in time actually served.

Regardless, it is important to gather legal, and any other relevant, information as to how Canadian prisoners can get sent back home. The idea is to start collecting this information and to connect prisoners who want to apply for such a transfer. At some point in time, lawyers will be sought. By doing the initial work, and by pooling resources, it should be easier to find legal expertise when needed. A few Canadians in Lompoc have already begun this process.

It would be real helpful to hear from people who have transferred back under this program, or who know what has happened to others who have. Any Canadian prisoner who would like to participate in this should write to:

D.C. Van Vlymen #26484-004
3901 Klein Blvd.
Lompoc, CA 93436

If you can't write to him directly, or through an outside source, send a letter to Bulldozer, and we'll forward it.

Bulldozer
POB 5052, Stn A
Toronto, Ont M5W 1W4 ∞

CBS to show mini-series on killing of Manitoba native woman

Conspiracy of Silence
Producer: Bernard Zukerman
Writer: Suzette Couture
Director: Francis Makiewicz

Conspiracy of Silence, a T.V. mini-series filmed for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), is based on the 1971 kidnapping, sexual assault and murder of Helen Betty Osborne, a 19 year-old Cree woman attending school in the northern Manitoba town of The Pas. The film attempts to dramatize the racism of the townspeople and police, which allowed the case to fester for 16 years, after a perfunctory police investigation, before charges were laid. The crime and subsequent police inaction constituted one of the incidents which led to Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. (See *PNS* # 32)

Unfortunately, by focusing on Lee Colgan, driver of the car carrying the 3 other young men involved in the murder, the film tries to emotionally manipulate viewers into sympathizing with his guilt-ridden, fearful and alcoholic condition. Appropriately enough, his father is the "respectable" manager of the local liquor store, a status which, along with being white, results in a 7-month delay before the car is examined by the police, even though it is linked to the killers almost immediately.

This leads to the fundamental problem with the film. It tells the story almost entirely from the viewpoint of the white community. Helen Betty Osborne is little more than an abstraction, just a victim, as we're given just a glimpse of her life. This makes it difficult to develop any sympathy with her as an individual. Similarly, the native community in the town is not presented, even though we know it exists, and is developing its political and economic strength. But we know this only from hearing the racist comments of the white residents and of their being threatened by the plans for a native shopping mall. Without a community presence there is no sense of pressure by the native community which finally resulted in charges against 3 of the 4 men in 1987, let alone the development of an anti-colonial struggle. Instead, the "good-cop" Przybylski, is given the credit. In the Dec/87 trial, Dwayne Johnson, who forced Osborne into the car and later stabbed her with a screwdriver at least 50 times, was convicted of 2nd-degree murder and sentenced to life with a chance of parole after 10 years.

Overall, racism is shown to pervade this "quaint", isolated northern town, the site of a brutal, racist, sexist killing and subsequent mass denial where almost everyone knew who the culprits were — but the prevailing racism in white settler society as a whole is

obscured. No clear anti-racist position is taken, nor is there any sense of that it was (and is) the very profitable resource extraction, mines and lumbering, that had reduced the native community to the economic and social margins. Perhaps that is to be expected from Bernard Zukerman, the producer, who directed *The Squamish Five*, a hatchet job on the Vancouver Five, who as, Direct Action, carried out a series of bombings against corporate targets in the early eighties.

CBS has bought the mini-series from the CBC, and is expected to show it sometime late winter or early spring. Despite these features, *Conspiracy of Silence* is worth watching if only because it does show some of the social pathology in English-speaking Canada. Besides, it has enough scenes of people standing around in the snow drinking beer to confirm your stereotypes about Canada. ∞

Doing alternative radio?

An edited version of the talks given at our Attica event by Dacajewiah and Dan Myers is being prepared for radio play. If anyone involved in alternative radio would like a copy of the tape for air play, please contact Bulldozer. In exchange, we would like a tape from your station of an interview or talk given by or about political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S. that would be suitable for airing by the local alternative stations.

The Prison News Service — the guards don't like it, the wardens hate it and the prisoners love it.

But we need to raise money to continue to grow and expand. We've got the people and the commitment to go on doing the work. We can continue at our usual 12-page size for the next year by continuing to put in our own money and by getting our usual donations and subscriptions. But our goal is to have more 20-page issues. Not only would this allow us to increase the number of prisoners whose writings we can publish, it would also allow us to become more creative in the layout and design.

We know that most prisoners don't have the cash to help out — though any money received from prisoners is certainly appreciated, so it must come from our outside readers. We're not looking for large amounts from any one source — though that would be nice — but if your copy of the *PNS* is being read by several people, perhaps a small sum could be collected from each of them. If you've been getting a copy from one of our distributors, perhaps you could consider sending a donation. Or if you are receiving the *PNS* on a subscription basis, it might be time to send us some more. Prisoner-support groups might consider sending us money on a regular basis.

Please help us keep the prisoners smiling and learning and the pigs crying.



Marionette 'disappeared'

The Marion administration seems to feel that Bill Dunne's writing is such a threat that they have been preventing it from reaching Bulldozer for inclusion in the *PNS*. The new warden, Cecil Turner, seems to want to make his impression at Marion. It has been reported that he has arbitrarily added to the length of the program that a prisoner must progress through in order to get out of Marion. Cells are "shaken down" frequently without warning or reason. Forced cell moves are common and art material has been seized.

There has never been a problem in receiving Bill's work until Turner showed up on the scene. This makes the second consecutive issue of the *PNS* that Bill's material has either disappeared or been returned to him. We can't understand what Turner's problem is. He has: guns, goons, billy clubs, razor wire, concrete walls, cages and the mass media to back him up. All that Bill and the other prisoners have are: words, critical minds, unbreakable spirits, friends and comrades. Yet it is Turner that is panicking.

The Committee to End the Marion Lockdown is asking that people write to express their outrage at this new round of attacks on prisoners at Marion. Write to: Warden Cecil Turner, U.S. Penitentiary, P.O.B. 2000, Marion, IL, 62959; Representative William J. Hughes, Chair: Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration, Washington, D.C. 20515; Michael Quinlan, Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20534. ∞